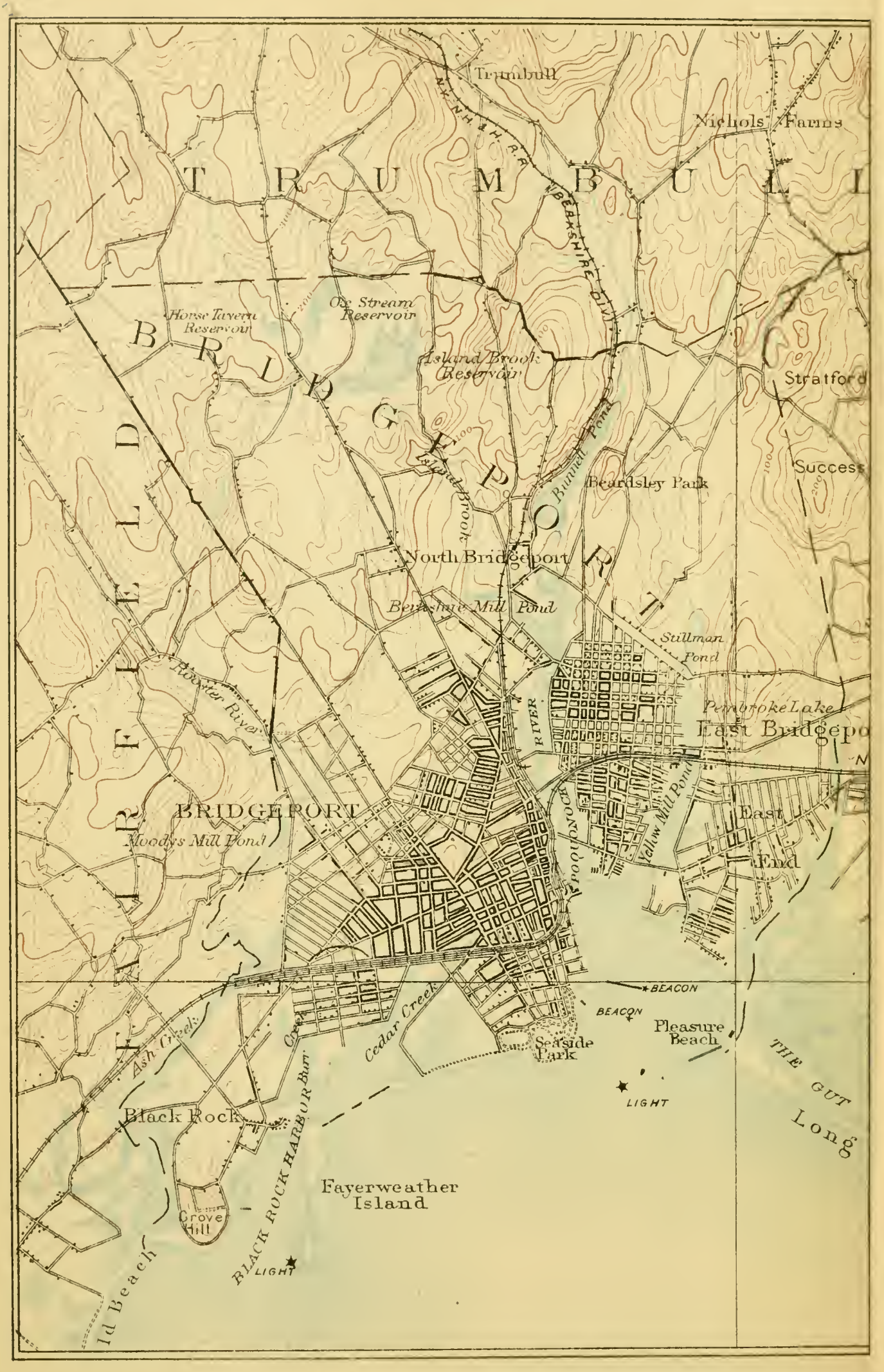
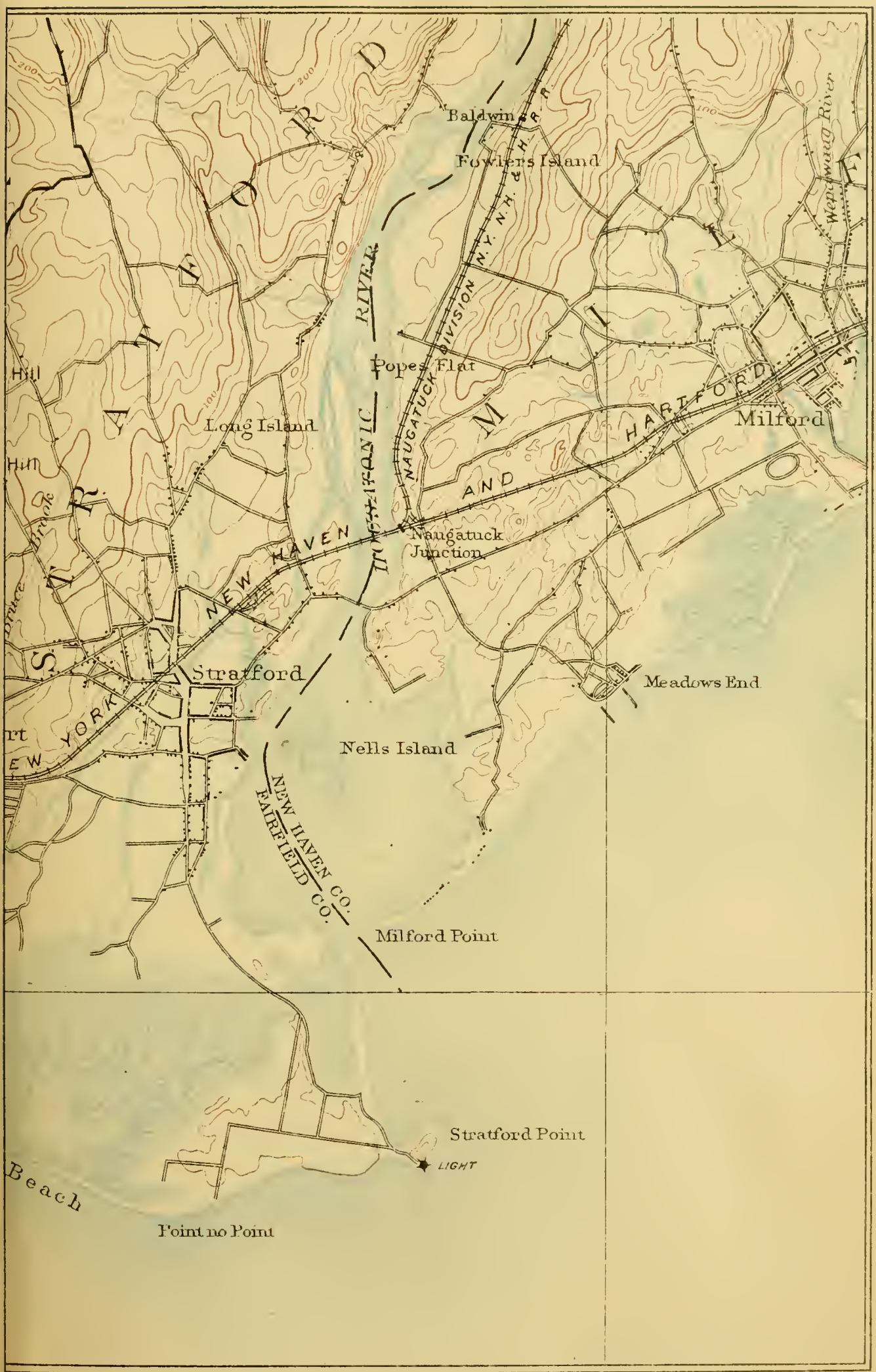


MAP OF THE REGION NEAR STRAT

From the United States



FORD AND FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

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A Walloon Family in America

Lockwood de Forest and his Forbears

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOLUME I

Lockwood De Forest

A Walloon Family IN AMERICA

Lockwood de Forest and his Forbears 1500–1848

By MRS. ROBERT W. DE FOREST

Together with

A VOYAGE TO GUIANA

BEING THE

Journal of Jesse de Forest

And his Colonists 1623–1625

VOLUME I

BOSTON and NEW YORK Published by
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To

THE DESCENDANTS OF

JESSE THE WALLOON

WHOSE INDOMITABLE COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE
GAVE THEM A HOME IN THE NEW WORLD

This Book is Dedicated

THAT THEY MAY HOLD HIM AND
THE GENERATIONS THAT FOLLOWED HIM
IN DUE HONOR

Preface

WHEN I first thought of writing about the de Forests, I had in mind merely to tell the story of the life of Lockwood de Forest, my husband's grandfather, in a pamphlet to be compiled from the family papers which I had at hand. This idea has expanded by degrees. First, it seemed wise to say something about Lockwood's Connecticut ancestors, those sterling men and women who as pioneers were always pushing forward into the wilderness. Then it became necessary to speak of Isaack de Forest, the founder of the family in America, and of his fortunes as an early settler in New Amsterdam. Lastly, it grew quite imperative to give an account of Jesse, the father of Isaack, about whom it is now possible to tell more than was ever known before. Thus has a simple pamphlet expanded into a book — a book which has really been written backward.

It is, to be sure, not the first volume about the de Forest family, for Major John W. De Forest had already written an able and interesting history of them,[1] on which he expended years of research.

[1] The de Forests of Avesnes (and of New Netherland), a Huguenot Thread in American Colonial History, 1494 to the Present Time. 1900.

Without Major De Forest's book as a basis, my own task would have been infinitely harder and might, indeed, never have been undertaken. Much new material, however, has been discovered since he wrote, and many questions which he raised can now be answered.

It is nearly three hundred years since Jesse de Forest crossed the stormy seas with his companions, to carry out his long-cherished purpose of planting a colony in the New World. And yet, extraordinary as it may seem, an account of that voyage, of the stay of his colonists in Guiana, and of Jesse's death there, has, until a very recent date, remained unnoticed and apparently unknown in the British Museum. So interesting and historically valuable has the contemporary account of this early colonizing venture seemed, that besides using the material contained therein in my treatment of the incidents of the voyage in Chapter II of this book, I am publishing, in Volume II, on pages 188 to 279, the whole of the original narrative in the quaint old French of the manuscript with an English translation.

The discovery of this journal, which has sometimes been called " Jesse de Forest's Journal," gives us access to indirect testimony with regard to the disputed date of the founding of the New Netherland colony and also disposes of the theory that Jesse himself was one of its earliest settlers. Whether or not the French and Walloons who

were prepared to follow Jesse across the seas to Guiana eventually found their way to the Dutch colony of New Netherland is still an open question, which will be referred to in the course of these pages.

The "Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts,"[1] recently translated, have also furnished new information. Through them we now have an account of the voyage by which Jesse's three children, Hendrick, Isaack, and Rachel, came to America. Also, in these papers there are certain clues which, being followed up in the historical works of de Laet, van Wassenaer, or de Vries, have given us details with which to fill out and amplify the story of the lives of these pioneers both during their journeyings and in New Amsterdam. There have always been plenty of references in the various records of New Amsterdam to Isaack de Forest, who lived to be sufficiently "old and suitable" to be made a "schepen" and a "great burgher." But Hendrick and Rachel died in the flower of their youth, and details about their lives, meagre enough now, would have been still more meagre save for these papers.

When we come to the Connecticut period, the time when Isaack's son David settled in Stratford, I depend largely upon Major De Forest's book and

[1] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, being the letters of Kiliaen van Rensselaer, 1630–1643, and other documents, edited and most of them translated by A. J. F. van Laer, State Archivist, Albany, N.Y., 1908.

Orcutt's History of Stratford,[1] also upon the papers left by the Rev. Benjamin L. Swan, who for several years was the pastor of the Congregational Church in the little hill town of Monroe (formerly New Stratford), where David's son and grandson lived. Mr. Swan was a friend of my father-in-law, Henry G. de Forest, and in his behalf made researches in that hill country for a number of years.[2]

For many early records of the little town I am under obligation to Albert Wheeler, a nephew of Mrs. Lockwood de Forest and the present clerk of sessions of the Congregational Church at Monroe, who gave me free access to all the old church documents which are still in existence. Town and church records were also consulted in Shelton, Stratford, Bridgeport, and Fairfield. The many Connecticut town histories which I have seen should also be mentioned, although they are not always very accurate in genealogical details.

For the Revolutionary material I am indebted to that invaluable although necessarily incomplete work, "Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution," [3] and also to the files

[1] Orcutt, Rev. Samuel. A History of the Old Town of Stratford and the City of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

[2] Mr. Swan was the more interested in the de Forests because he had married the widow of Charles, half-brother of Lockwood de Forest.

[3] Compiled under the direction of the Adjutants-General, with an introduction by Henry P. Johnston. Hartford, 1889.

of the Pension and War Offices at Washington, from the officials of which I received much courtesy.

Thus we come to the time of Lockwood and Mehetabel his wife. For this part of the story I had plenty of material — documents, letters, and papers of all kinds. Many traditions, too, preserved by people still living or who have but recently passed to their rest have been related to me.

With regard to the church trial of Lockwood de Forest, I have felt that the whole episode was most interesting historically, and it has seemed to me altogether fortunate that Lockwood's forty documents were not destroyed, as so many others have been. The reason why I have so carefully and scrupulously given all the material concerning the prosecution is because that course was the only one that lay open to me if I were to touch the subject at all.

So the story grew! Why have I written it? Primarily to preserve the intimate family records of the de Forest family in their historical setting for the now large number of descendants of Lockwood and Mehetabel de Forest. In the second place, I have tried to draw a faithful picture of the upbuilding and vicissitudes of family life in New York City and Connecticut in the early days of our country. The history of many another New England family is similar to this one, and into such surroundings, geographical and political, material and spiritual, as are here presented the descendants of these other

families can no doubt fit their own particular records or memories. But it must be remembered — if this book falls into the hands of readers outside the de Forest family who find it filled with little intimate details of family life — that one of my aims has been to preserve just such details as would help to build up for the knowledge of future generations the personal characteristics which made the early settlers of our country the industrious, strong-hearted, and God-fearing, though often blundering, men and women that they were. This account is therefore the story of the plain, simple life of one of these families. Happily there were hundreds and hundreds of such families, but unfortunately not many have left such records as have the de Forests.

One rather puzzling question I have been obliged to decide — the spelling of the de Forest names. It has seemed best to me to write the surname throughout as my family now write it — de Forest. The name is, indeed, spelled in many different ways in different parts of the country. Many of the Albany de Forests, for instance, have become De Freests. As to the Christian names, I give each name in the first place as I find it in the baptismal record and later spell it as the man himself wrote it. For example, Hendrick was apparently baptized Henry in Sedan, but was always called Hendrick in Leyden and in New Amsterdam, and he used the latter name for his signature.

In one matter I have been particularly fortunate; that is, with regard to the historical documents in the State Library at Albany. A number of them referred in one way or another to the de Forest family, and most of these I had had translated shortly before the fire in the State House which destroyed so many invaluable and irreplaceable documents. Some of these translations will be found in the Appendix.

In addition to the family records in Major De Forest's book there is a great deal of early de Forest material to be found in Riker's "History of Harlem," [1] although Riker was liable at times to adopt conclusions too hastily, and to state them as facts. He cannot therefore be believed implicitly. The same can be said with reference to Orcutt's History of Stratford.

My thanks are due to many friends who have helped me in many ways: to Monsieur Albert Gravet of Avesnes, who knows all the old records of that little city so well; to Miss Jane de Forest Shelton of Derby, Connecticut, who was herself descended from a de Forest and who in "The Salt Box House" had written so charmingly and so sympathetically of the old Connecticut days and ways; and to Messrs.

[1] Riker, James. Revised History of Harlem (City of New York). Its Origin and Early Annals. Also the Recovered History of the Land-Titles. Illustrations and maps. New York, 1904.

A. J. F. van Laer, Victor H. Paltsits, I. N. Phelps Stokes, Robert H. Kelby, R. T. Haines Halsey, William L. Andrews, J. H. Innes, Harris D. Colt, Louis E. de Forest, Sterling Potter, Rev. Frank S. Child, Sir William van Horne, and others, all of whom have aided me with advice or have allowed me the use of their valuable prints as illustrations.

E. J. DE F.

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A Walloon Family in America

LOCKWOOD DE FOREST AND HIS FORBEARS

A
Walloon Family in America

LOCKWOOD DE FOREST AND HIS FORBEARS

I

THE ANCESTRY OF JESSE DE FOREST

JESSE DE FOREST belonged to the ancient race of Walloons — the "Belgæ" of Cæsar's day — a race whose history doubtless reaches back to even earlier times. The Walloons were a warlike people, vigorous, if rude, who spoke, when our knowledge of them begins, an old French dialect, and whose robust powers soon led them to become skilled in industry and trade as well as effective in war. Concerning them Major John W. De Forest, who has made an exhaustive study of the early de Forest material, writes as follows: "Beaten upon by the Gauls, the Cimbri, the Romans and the Franks, the Walloons stubbornly retain their identity and a certain definiteness of boundary, and number towards four millions of well-looking, strongly-built, brunet-skinned and generally dark-haired people,

Avesnes

Avesnes industrious, fervid in temper and always excellent soldiers." [1]

The Walloon territory was originally that now comprised by the northeastern part of France and the southwestern part of Belgium. It is said that there are still nearly a million of this race living in France itself and nearly three millions across the border in Belgium.

Early in the sixteenth century, when our story begins, the interest centres in a particular Walloon province — that of Hainaut, in the extreme northeastern corner of France. This particular province formed in the past an ever-changing boundary between France and the Spanish Netherlands and was for centuries the battlefield of warring nobles. Nor was that all. The province became one of the strongholds of the Reformation, and to the conflict of warring nobles was added the religious persecution of the Spanish princes — a persecution which left the Huguenots in the Walloon country no choice but destruction or flight. During the latter half of the sixteenth century thousands of them fled to escape ruin and perchance massacre.

In the French part of Hainaut there was in early

[1] De Forest, John W. The de Forests of Avesnes (and of New Netherland), a Huguenot Thread in American Colonial History, 1494 to the Present Time, p. 16. New Haven, 1900. Copies of this book may still be had through the publishers, The Tuttle, Morehouse & Taylor Company, New Haven, Connecticut.

DISUSED "PORTE DE MONS," AVESNES

days a flourishing little fortress-city, Avesnes by name, which was not spared in the troublous times when Hainaut was devastated; it suffered with the rest of the province, was owned by many successive masters, and was, at least once, completely destroyed. *Avesnes*

In this city Jesse de Forest was born and here his forbears had undoubtedly dwelt for several generations.[1] They bore picturesque and fascinating names such as Gilles, Melchior, Anthoine, Jaspard, and Balthazar. The family was evidently of good burgher stock and there is always the possibility that the "de" indicated nobility in the olden times; but even if this were the case, it did not deter the various scribes from distorting the name in many different spellings — du Forret, des Forests, des Foretz, de Freest, de Forre, de forré, even foré, and many other spellings. Jesse himself always spelled it de Forest.

The grandparents of our Jesse were Melchior de Forest and Catherine Du Fosset of Mons. We do not know when they were born, but they were married in 1533 in Avesnes, which was situated in what was then France.[2] Melchior and his wife were at that time of the Catholic faith, although Protestantism was already beginning to make great pro-

[1] All the questions concerning those early de Forests have already been most ably discussed in Major De Forest's book, and to that authority we would refer our readers.

[2] In 1559 Hainaut was ceded to Spain by the French.

Avesnes gress in the Netherlands and especially among the Walloons. Melchior in the old records was called "a merchant dwelling in Avesnes," or a "merchant draper," and we know that he was an alderman there in 1563 and 1564. In 1569 he was no longer residing within the city but in a little hamlet called Guersignies, situated just beneath the walls of Avesnes.

This hamlet owed its being to the fact that on the broad plain below, which faced the south and the southeast, there existed even as early as the middle of the sixteenth century the extensive vineyards of Guersignies. Melchior had evidently at this time enlarged his interests so as to include vine growing, for he and his wife Catherine had bought up the leasehold of more than one tract of land in that vicinity, among them a "rente heritable," which he had purchased on April 13, 1556, for a house and garden which lay within the "haie" or enclosure just beyond the city gates. He had therefore taken up his residence in Guersignies, at any rate for part of the time, the better to care for his vineyards. No poet has sung the praises of the wine of Guersignies and the vineyards have disappeared by degrees, although a certain number of vines had been preserved until within the last few years, when the owner destroyed them, saying that as they made "a very poor, thin, sour little wine" he had rather use the land for something else.

Melchior died at Avesnes in 1571 and was without

SITE OF MELCHIOR DE FOREST'S VINEYARD, AVESNES

As it appeared in 1911

doubt buried from the Cathedral there. The little city was then the seat of a bishopric, and besides the Cathedral it had ecclesiastical residences and cloisters; we know that there was also a Chapter House for the twelve Canons of the Cathedral Chapter of St. Nicholas. *Avesnes*

In this Chapter we should feel an especial interest, for two de Forests were Canons of the order. One, Jaspard, was a son of Melchior, and the other, Gilles, was either his son or his nephew. Canon Gilles lived long enough to become Dean of the Chapter, a dignity which came with seniority. The office of Canon carried with it a right to the title "Messire." As a tailpiece to this chapter is shown the medal which hung on the neck of Messire Gilles. It is of bronze, oval in shape, as prescribed for the clergy, and on it the inscription reads as follows: "S. egidii. c. tici. de Avesnis" (Seal of Gilles, clerical dean of Avesnes). This medal is still to be seen in the Archæological Museum at Avesnes.

All Melchior's children held honorable positions. Several were aldermen, burghers, and drapers, and with the exception of the two Canons all were wool-merchants, wool being the staple of industry among the Walloons.

Jean de Forest, the father of Jesse and the first Protestant in the family, was the son, probably the youngest son, of Melchior de Forest and Catherine Du Fosset. The date of his birth must have been not

Avesnes far from 1543. But before we give the meagre details which are available regarding his life, it behooves us to sketch briefly the religious conditions of his time and near his home; for religion became a vital factor in determining Jean's life and the lives of his children. When Jean and his brothers and sisters were baptized, it was as members of the Catholic church, for the Walloon country up to about that time was still Catholic in faith. But while Jean was yet young, the Huguenot preachers were earnestly at work among the Walloons exhorting, distributing Bibles, and stirring up the people against their mother church, and it may be that even so early in his life Jean became a convert. In any event, Protestantism through these means took a firm hold upon many of the people and in 1566 Protestant uprisings took place in a number of the neighboring small cities. Nothing of the kind happened in Avesnes, however. Why, we do not know; possibly there was a Spanish garrison then within its walls.

The following year the Catholics came to the front once more with furious onslaught and there were massacres and burnings and confiscations all around. Thus the religious war waged on in the unfortunate province of Hainaut, with first one party and then the other in power. William of Orange only made things worse by coming into the Walloon country at the head of a German army. He was completely routed, and his soldiers, wild and famished hordes,

were left to prey upon the long-suffering inhabitants. *Avesnes*
Surely Avesnes was not then a pleasant city in which to dwell.

Nor should we suppose it a propitious moment in which to think of love and marriage. Yet it was at about this period that Jean took to himself a wife. We cannot tell the exact date of this event, for the church records are missing and the town records give us little information of any kind. It must have been about 1570. The name of the bride was Anne Maillard and she was the daughter of Michel Maillard, mayor of the neighboring town of Felleries.

The site of Jean's house is still to be seen on the market-place of Avesnes, although a modern house now replaces the old one. Here his four children — Melchior, Jesse, Gerard, and a daughter, Anne — were born. The city records make few references to Jean, which may indicate that he was often absent from Avesnes. He was a draper, and as there must have been little demand at home for fine woolen cloth during those war times, it is possible that he had to travel in search of a market.

Jean de Forest was probably not a declared follower of the Reformed religion while he continued to live in Avesnes; many of the new faith were there at that time, but they had to practise their religion in secret for fear of the horrors of the Inquisition. When at last in 1598 peace between France and Spain was declared and the Spanish soldiery were withdrawn,

Avesnes the whole Walloon country was in a terribly devastated condition. Cities were wrecked, fields ruined, and highways destroyed or overgrown. Avesnes suffered with the rest and was certainly not an advantageous centre for a wool merchant with a wife and family to support.

Sedan Perhaps Jean decided to leave the city of his birth and to remove with his family to some less disquieted region in order to carry on his trade with more security. It seems likely, however, that his main reason was a religious one, and the other members of his family apparently were influenced by the same consideration. At any rate, in 1601, three years after peace was declared, Jean, now an avowed Protestant, is found making his home in the city of Sedan (in the little Protestant principality of Luxemburg), his son Jesse being with him and avowing the same faith. In the Sedan records of 1601 Jean is called a "merchant residing in this city," undoubtedly a wool merchant. Soon after, we find Jean's son Melchior, also a Protestant, in Lisle, and before long

Holland the youngest son, Gerard, was residing in Leyden, Holland, where he became a member of the Reformed Church "by confession of faith." Surely a scattering of the clan! It therefore seems as if something untoward must have occurred — the disasters of war or religious persecution, or both — to drive the de Forest family from their former home.

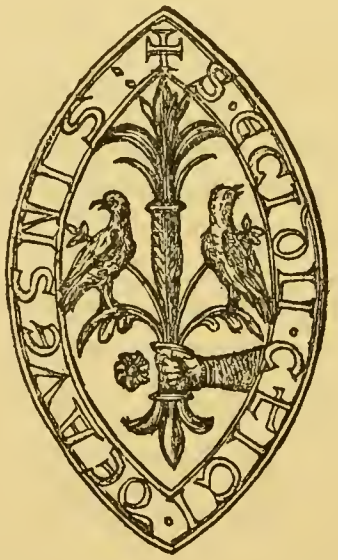
With the breaking up of the old home ties Jean

seems to have become permanently unsettled and thereafter was more or less a wanderer. Holland in the early seventeenth century was an attractive goal for the Protestants. She was rich and free and prosperous in every way. Already five hundred thousand Walloons had emigrated from France and the Roman Catholic Netherlands and most of them had taken refuge in Holland, carrying with them their skill in manufactures, their industry, and their splendid warlike qualities. So what more natural than that Jean and his family should also seek this free country, where every one had an opportunity to make the most of his talents. As we have said, Jean was living in Sedan in 1601 and we know that he was then present at his son Jesse's wedding in that town. The following year Jean and his wife had already gone to Berghen op Zoom, where they remained long enough to join the church there. In 1603 we hear of them as members of the church in Leyden, and the next year they belonged to that in Amsterdam. *Holland*

Here Anne Maillard, Jean's wife, elected to remain, and with good reason, for her young daughter, Anne, had lived there, probably with relations, ever since 1601. Anne de Forest was only seventeen when her mother joined her in 1604, and the mother probably felt that the young girl needed her care. Two years later we find a betrothal taking place, that of Anne de Forest, aged nineteen, and Jean le

Holland Fevre of Leyden, "a boy of twenty two." [1] He was called a "caffatier," though what that might have been it is now impossible to say. The would-be bride was told to get the written consent of her father, but when the paper came, it was found to have been signed by the minister at Vosmeer (near Berghen op Zoom), where presumably her father was then living. He may have been ill at the time and so have asked the minister to sign for him or it is even possible that he may have died; in any event, this episode marks the last discoverable trace of Jean, the first Protestant in the de Forest family.

[1] A boy according to Dutch law was not of age until he was twenty-five years old.



II

JESSE DE FOREST

1576?–1624

The Petitioner for Freedom

HAVING already shown the kind of stock from which Jesse de Forest sprang, with all its sterling qualities, we must now turn to Jesse's own history, which, notwithstanding all the gaps in its sequence, is noteworthy. *Avesnes*

He was born in Avesnes and spent his boyhood there during the time of the little city's great stress,[1] so that the young Huguenot was probably imbued from his earliest days with hatred for the enemies of his country and his religion and with longing for freedom and escape from religious persecution. The turbulent scenes of his childhood undoubtedly supplied the motives which underlay the acts of his subsequent life.

The first mention which we find of Jesse tells of his marriage at Sedan in 1601. Assuming that he was then twenty-five, we should place his birth in the *Sedan*

[1] When Jesse's parents and grandparents were born in Avesnes it belonged to France, but at the time of Jesse's birth it was in the Spanish Netherlands. It has often been asserted that when Jesse lived there Avesnes was a Belgian city, but this is quite incorrect, as Belgium did not become a separate kingdom until 1830.

Sedan year 1576. His father had left Avesnes for Sedan at some time during the three years prior to 1601, so that Jesse had had opportunity in the latter place to meet and to be attracted by young Marie du Cloux. She was the daughter of Nicaise du Cloux, a fellow-merchant of Jesse's father. The members of the du Cloux family were people of good position in Sedan—merchants, barristers, and surgeons. The wedding of Jesse de Forest and Marie du Cloux took place on Sunday, September 23, 1601, "at the Catechism," and the Sieur du Tilloy (evidently the Protestant minister) blessed their marriage.

The next year, July 7, 1602, the same pastor baptized their daughter, Marie, and this baptism was followed by others: Jean (later called Jan or Jehan), July 22, 1604; Henry (known to us, however, as Hendrick), March 7, 1606; Elizabeth, November 1, 1607; and David, December 11, 1608. After this last record there is a gap of eight years in the Sedan church register, and so the birth date of the next child, Rachel, is lost, but it probably was in 1609, the year when Henry Hudson discovered the great river which bears his name, on the shores of which Rachel was later to make her home.

When Jesse's father went to Holland in 1602, he must have left his mercantile business in Sedan to Jesse, for in that year we first find the latter spoken of as "merchant," undoubtedly a merchant in woolen cloth. Jesse probably stayed in Sedan in

DE STAELMEESTERS, USUALLY CALLED "THE SYNDICS OF THE CLOTH HALL," 1675

The inspectors are examining an unrolled bolt of blue cloth and comparing it with a stael or sample. Behind them stands the clerk, holding the stamping iron in his hand

Painted by Johan de Blaue. In the Lakenhal, Leyden

this capacity until 1607, when we find him, for a few years, at a place not far off called Montcornet; it was there that he was first called "merchant-dyer." He then followed the rest of his family to Holland, where his name appears in the Walloon registers of Leyden in 1615. *Leyden*

His brothers, who had preceded him to Holland, were already established there. Melchior, the eldest brother, in 1611 had become a member of the Protestant church in Amsterdam and there he had married. Gerard, Jesse's younger brother, of whom we shall have a good deal to tell in the course of our story, was in Leyden as early as 1605, and in 1606, having already obtained permission to become a "dyer in black," bought land of the Leyden burgomasters for a dye-house. In 1616 he bought a house upon the Mare, and the next year purchased the rights of citizenship. He found his bride in Leyden, although she also was of French descent — Hester de la Grange, daughter of Crispin de la Grange, who was a fellow-dyer. Gerard and his wife had six children.

With this brief mention of the other brothers, we must return to Jesse, in whom we are most interested. When Jesse came to Leyden in 1615, he was presumably still a merchant in woolen cloth and had been a dyer for seven years. To become a dyer in Leyden, however, was not an entirely simple matter. First, the petitioner had to apply to the magistrates

Leyden of the city for admission to the Drapers' Guild. The magistrates then sent the request to the Superintendents and Governors of the Drapers' Guild for "advice." The advice being favorable, the petitioner took "the customary oath to the Burgomasters and Rulers of the City" and promised to "conduct himself according to rules and regulations made and hereafter to be made with regard to the said dyeing."

There were at that time two classes of dyers: those who were permitted to dye in black only, and others, a higher and restricted class, who because of their proficiency could dye in colors. To the latter class Jesse was admitted and, having become a member of the Drapers' Guild, was allowed to dye "wools and camlets" in colors.

In Leyden Jesse and Marie lived on the Breedestraet, where four more children were born to them: Jesse, baptized March 1, 1615; Isaac, July 10, 1616; Israel, October 7, 1617; and Philippe, September 13, 1620, making ten children in all — a good many for our refugee to care for. Apparently he found difficulty in providing for them; for in 1618 he owed fifty florins on the rent of his house, and for this pitiful sum was obliged to pledge his furniture and dyery-cauldron. No wonder that he looked about him to discover a better opportunity for a man with a large family of young children and nothing but a dyer's business wherewith to support them.

RINSING, DYEING, AND TESTING OF CLOTH

In the foreground the rinsers, to the left the dyeing, and to the right the official testing of the cloth.

Painted for the Saaihal (Serge Hall), Leyden, in 1574 by Isaac Claesz. In the Lakenhal (Cloth Hall), Leyden, now a municipal museum

He had already moved twice since his marriage — perhaps he had better move again. Holland had become very crowded since so many Protestants had gone thither for safety. Was there, perchance, a place with wider opportunities and more space in which to grow — a place, of course, where he and his family could practise their religion? For the sake of their faith they had already given up many things, and they were prepared to dare and to sacrifice still further. *Leyden*

In Leyden at this period there was a company of English Protestants who with their pastor, John Robinson, had taken refuge there from the religious persecution of their native land. It is known that much cordiality and friendship existed between these French and English Protestants, so that it must have been a matter of great interest and inspiration to Jesse when a part of this company, the "Pilgrim Fathers," left Leyden in 1620 to try their fortunes in the New World. The Pilgrims hoped by this move to preserve not only their religion but also their language. Would it not be well for the Walloons to follow their example?

It is not unlikely that Jesse had had such thoughts vaguely in mind when as a boy he lived in Avesnes and felt the stern hand of religious oppression weighing upon his father. So he brooded, till the idea of leading a colony of Protestant Walloons to the New World became a veritable obsession. Jesse, however,

Leyden could not be satisfied with brooding. He was a man of action; with him planning was by natural sequence followed by energetic efforts to put his plans into execution. So active and efficient was he that in the following year, 1621, he had already enlisted some fifty or sixty Walloon and French Protestant families who were ready to emigrate to the New World under his leadership.

The Dutch nation laid claim at that time to large tracts of land in North America, although they had not yet made any serious attempts to plant settlements there. They purposed forming a Dutch West India Company which should manage all such matters, but the Company was not as yet organized.

The Pilgrim Fathers had gone to America under a patent from the Virginia Company and some of Jesse's compatriots had gone with them. It was quite natural, therefore, all these things considered, that Jesse himself should propose to emigrate with his followers under the auspices of the same company. So, being in all things the leader of the enterprise, Jesse went to The Hague to see the British Ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton, and to lay before him his cherished plan of emigration. The Ambassador has left us an account of the interview, written on July 19, 1621, to the British State Secretary.

"There hath been with me of late," he wrote, "a certaine Walon, in the name of divers families, men of all trades and occupations, who desire to goe unto

LAST PAGE OF JESSE DE FOREST'S PETITION TO THE VIRGINIA COMPANY, 1621

British State Papers, dated Holland, 1622 [should read 1621]

Soubs lesquelles conditions & priuileges ils promettenoient foy & obeissance telle que doiuent fidelles & obeissans subjects a leur Roy & souuerain seigneur se sousmetteront aus lois generallement establies ausdites terres de tout leur pouuoir

Sur ce que dessus mondict seigneur l'Ambassadeur donnera auis s'il luy plaist comme aussi si son plaisir seroit de faire expedier ledict priuilege en forme deue le plustost que faire se pourra a cause du peu de temps qui reste dicy au mars (temps commode pour lembarquement) pour faire lacceuil de tout ce qui est requis ce faisant obligera ses seruiteurs a prier Dieu pour laccomplissement de ses [illegible] desirs & pour sa sante & longue vie

Jesse de Forest

Virginia. . . . I required of him his demands in writing, with the signatures of such as were to bear part therein both of which I send your honor herewith." *Leyden*

Two days after the interview, Jesse presented the "demands," written by him in French and signed by him.[1] In this document, a very able one, Jesse asked in the name of the colonists "whether it would please His Majesty to permit fifty or sixty families, as well Walloons as French, all of the Reformed religion, to go and settle in Virginia, a country under his rule, and whether it would please him to undertake their protection and defence from and against all and to maintain them in their religion."

The would-be colonists, said Jesse, were willing to provide one ship themselves if His Majesty would provide a second one, as they might number three hundred persons, besides many head of cattle. They also asked that they be granted in Virginia "a circuit or territory of eight English miles radius"; that is, sixteen miles in diameter, wherein no outsiders should dwell. Here they wished to "build a city for their protection and furnish it with the necessary fortifications," to elect a governor and magistrates, to make their own powder, cannon, and balls, to cut their own timber, and to hunt game, whether furred or feathered. They asked, in a word, "whether they

[1] For a translation of this document and those which follow, see Appendix of The de Forests of Avesnes, p. 190 et seq.

Leyden might make use of everything above and below ground according to their will and pleasure, saving the royal rights." In this territory they wished to reserve "Inferior Seigneurial Rights": that is, they asked that "those who could live as nobles should be permitted to style themselves as such." Under these conditions they promised "such fealty and obedience as loyal and obedient subjects owe to their King and Sovereign Lord."

Accompanying this document was a Round Robin, in size 18×13½ inches, signed by fifty-six men, most of them heads of families, the whole number comprising two hundred and twenty-seven men, women, and children.[1] Jesse's name was, of course, one of the fifty-six and he proposed to take with him his wife and the five children then at home. These were, according to the Leyden poll tax of 1622, "Jean, Henry, Rachel, Isaac, and Geche, Jr." [Jesse].

Within the circle of the Round Robin were a few words promising that the signers would settle in Virginia "under the conditions set forth in the articles which we have communicated," and ending rather significantly, "and not otherwise." This inscription, as well as the document of demands, is in the handwriting of Jesse de Forest.

After the demands were sent, on July 21, 1621, the

[1] In C. W. Baird's History of the Huguenot Emigration to America, vol. 1, p. 162, the names of the men who signed the Round Robin may be found.

ROUND ROBIN SENT WITH JESSE'S PETITION TO THE VIRGINIA COMPANY, 1621
WITH SIGNATURES OF WALLOON AND FRENCH PETITIONERS

In the Public Record Office, London

Nous promettons a Monseigneur l'Ambassadeur du Serenissime Roy de la grande Bretagne de nous aller Saberuer en Virginie terre de l'obeissance de sa majesté le plus tost que faire se pourra et ce soubs les conditions portees aus articles que nous auons communiquez a Mondict Seigneur l'Ambassadeur [illegible] nous auons signé ceste presente promesse manuellement de nos seins manuels le

SAVE HER MAJESTY'S STATE PAPER HOPPER

Walloons hoped for a speedy answer, for they were anxious to start the following March. The answer returned by the Virginia Company on August 11th was not at all what Jesse had hoped for. His great object was to have his colonists dwell together and apart from others, so that they might maintain their religion as well as their language. But the Virginia Company thought otherwise. *Leyden*

The Directors said that they saw no "inconvenience" in having three hundred Walloons and French settle in Virginia. On the other hand, they "esteeme it so Royall a favour in His Ma'tie and so singular a benefit to the said Walloons and ffrenchmen, to bee admitted to live in that fruitful land" that, in fact, they could do nothing for them but — give them good advice. They did, moreover, "concieve it not expedient that the sayd ffamilies should sett downe in one grosse bodie," but they offered to place them "by convenient nombers in the principall Citties Borroughs and Corporacions in Virginia."

This was, of course, a bitter disappointment. To scatter the settlers would prove a direct blow to their language as well as to their religion — the religion to which they clung so tenaciously and for which they were willing to sacrifice so much. But Jesse was not discouraged. He had to give up the idea of taking his people to America under the protection of the English, but he considered that his project was not really defeated, only delayed.

Leyden For some eight months Jesse de Forest waited, perfecting his plans, possibly also hoping from day to day that the Dutch West India Company would be organized. Seeing, however, that the formation of that august body was advancing with truly Dutch deliberation, he carried his petition (in April, 1622) to the powerful provincial legislature, known as the "States of Holland and West Friesland." He apparently asked them to make arrangements for conveying to the West Indies certain families of the Christian Reformed religion and to authorize him to enlist such families. It must be understood that the term West Indies as then used included both North and South America. The States referred the plan for advice to the Directors of the still incomplete West India Company, who approved of it but counseled delay till they should be fully incorporated. They urged the States, however, to promote the plan and to promise that the families should be employed after their arrival.

It appears that nothing further was done, and after waiting four months more, Jesse took up the matter anew, this time with the national legislative body, the States General (of the United Netherlands), asking for "authorization to inscribe and enroll, for the colonies, families of the Christian reformed Religion willing to make the voyage to the West Indies for the advancement and service of the West India Company."

Leyden

The States General referred the petition once more to the provincial body, to whom Jesse had already applied, the States of Holland and West Friesland, and on August 27, 1622, they in turn sent him an answer granting his request and authorizing "the said Jesse des Forest . . . to enroll for the colonies all families having the qualifications requisite for being of use and service to the country, the same to be transported to the West Indies," the only conditions being that he should do so with the "mutual knowledge and consent" of the authorities in the various cities where he might enroll his colonists and that he furnish "a report thereof to the honorable Gentlemen."

It thus becomes evident that Jesse was planning to enlarge the scope of his enrollment so as to include citizens from other Dutch cities as well as Leyden, and it is also evident that he no longer made such sweeping demands as at first. He did not even ask that his colonists might govern themselves.

Until within a few years it has been supposed that the Resolutions of the States of Holland and West Friesland contained the last authentic mention of Jesse de Forest's enterprises. Many have been the surmises as to his fate, and many the regrets that it could not be known whether he ever realized his hopes by going with a colony of his own people to the land of his desires.

While so many surmises were current, there lay

Leyden hidden in the British Museum[1] a most interesting and remarkable manuscript — a "Journal" of the voyage whereby Jesse did indeed lead a colony across the seas, together with an account of his death in Guiana, far from his Dutch home and family. The title of the manuscript as given on the first page is "Journal du voyage faict par les peres de familles enuoyes par Mr̃s. les Directeurs de la Compagnee des Indes occidentales pour visiter la coste de Gujane." [2]

The identity of the writer of the Journal, a matter of great interest to scholars, cannot be clearly established. The manuscript has been spoken of as "Jesse de Forest's Journal," but Jesse died before many of the events related in the later pages had occurred. It is not improbable that one of Jesse's colonists, Jean Mousnier de la Montagne, "estudient en medicine," was, for at least part of the time, the scribe. We shall probably never know surely.[3]

From the Journal itself we learn that Jesse, who

[1] Sloane MS. 179 b under the heading "Guiana."

[2] This interesting contemporary narrative of Jesse's adventure, together with all information available concerning it, appears in Volume II of this work, at p. 169, under the title, "A Voyage to Guiana, being the Journal of Jesse de Forest and His Colonists, 1623–1625." It has also been used as source material throughout this chapter.

[3] For a full treatment of this subject, with such evidence as the writer could gather in support of her theory that La Montagne was the scribe, at any rate of the later part, see the Introduction to the Journal, pp. 178ff.

A DUTCH KITCHEN OF ABOUT THE TIME OF JESSE DE FOREST

As shown in the Lakenhal, Leyden

in 1622 had been authorized to "inscribe and enroll" families, had not been idle, but, true to his determination to found a colony across the seas, in 1623 had already secured the names of a number of families who desired to settle in the Indies. *Leyden*

The West India Company was finally organized on June 21, 1623, and it immediately began to form vast projects — so vast that they were expected to astonish the world. One mighty fleet under Admiral Willekens was to wrest Brazil from the Spaniards; another was to seize the coasts of Congo and Angola, so as to ensure a supply of negro slaves for work in the new territory; still another squadron was to cruise on the Atlantic and destroy all Spanish war vessels. A single ship, probably to be followed by others, was to establish a colony on the Hudson River, and several vessels were also to plant colonies and trading posts along the "Wild Coast," as the northeastern coast of South America was then called.

In these last colonies our interest centres, for, as the Journal says, "at the beginning of their administration" the West India Company fitted out a small ship of about ninety tons, named the Pigeon, probably such as was called a yacht, to visit the Amazons and the coast of Guiana. This ship was to be commanded by Pieter Fredericsz of Harlem.

Jesse then felt that his opportunity had come. His first plan, to go to North America, had indeed

Leyden failed, but the accounts of South America were in some ways more alluring. The Dutch merchants at this period thought the colonization of North America second in importance to that of the southerly continent. At the trading posts of South America they expected to find gold and possibly jewels, also dye-woods, coffee, and spices, in comparison with which valuable and picturesque products the furs, tobacco, and building timber of the northern continent seemed comparatively unimportant; they certainly did not tempt with the same glamour.

Therefore, Jesse eagerly petitioned the West India Company that his families might be "employed in the service of the Company" and transported to South America. Holland was now swarming with refugees whose only plea was for employment, and Jesse also was ready to be satisfied if the company would convey his families across the seas and promise to employ them after arrival.

The directors with obvious wisdom objected to the wholesale experiment of transporting families at once, but offered to take Jesse and some of the heads of families — "Pères de familles," as they called them — to the Wild Coast to select for themselves an advantageous site and to prepare it for the colony before risking the lives of women and children. A small band of men was therefore selected — ten besides our friend Jesse. We quote once more

THE BURGHER GUARD, 1626

Painted by "Mr. David Bailey." In the Lakenhal, Leyden

from the Journal: "There were chosen for this purpose Louis Le Maire, Barthelemi Digan, Anthoine Descendre, Anthoine Beaumont, Jehan Godebon, Abraham Douillers, Dominique Masure, Jehan and Gilles Daynes brothers and Jehan Mousnier de la Montagne, over whom when landed the said Jesse desforest was to have command." *Leyden*

A few words are necessary regarding the members of this party and their leader. Four of the men selected had signed the Round Robin in July, 1621, and now two years later were still eager for emigration — Jesse de Forest (or, as in the Round Robin, "Jesse de Forest, tincturier"); Barthelemi Digan (or "Barthelemy Digand, scyeur de bois"); Anthoine Descendre (or "Anthoin Desendre, laboureur"); and Jehan Mousnier de la Montagne ("Mousnier de la Montagne, estudient en medicine"). As we have just heard, Jesse de Forest was to be in charge of his colonists after they landed.

The identity and separate duties of the two men known in the Journal under the titles of "our Master" and "our Captain" are somewhat puzzling at first, but they become clear after a little study. The Pigeon was under command of Pieter Fredericsz of Harlem, "our Master," "le Maistre de navire," as he was called. The pères de familles were placed under his direction until such time as they should find a location to suit them for their settlement, after which they were to be under the leader-

Leyden ship of Jesse de Forest, "our Captain."[1] He was indeed a judicious and capable leader, as we shall see from the tale narrated in the Journal. Among his services we note that he discovered good places for dyeing cotton and that he collected plants from which dyestuffs could be made — for we must not forget that Jesse was a "tincturier."

The Voyage to the New World

At this point, Jesse's Journal becomes of real significance not only in the reconstruction of Jesse's own life, but also for the evidence which it gives in regard to a subject of historic importance over which there has been considerable controversy — the date of the founding of the New Amsterdam colony. It has even been claimed that Jesse himself should be considered the "Founder of New York," and it is interesting to trace how this very natural assumption came to be made. Before the discovery of the Journal our knowledge of Jesse practically came to an end with the statement of his brother Gerard in December, 1623, that Jesse "removed from here [Leyden] by the last ships which sailed from here for the West Indies." If we remember that March, 1623, has been considered by many reliable historians as the date when the good ship New Netherland, under command of Cornelis Mey, left Holland

[1] For proof of these assumptions see Volume II, pp. 117 f., in the Introduction to the Journal.

for New Netherland, what so natural as to infer that Jesse had sailed in this ship with the colony which he had enlisted apparently for that purpose? [1] The ship was fitted out by the Amsterdam Chamber of the West India Company, with whom we know that Jesse negotiated, and she conveyed a colony of thirty families, "mostly Walloons," to New Netherland.[2] The term "West Indies" used by Gerard in the statement about his brother was frequently if not usually employed to describe the whole of the Western Continent, so that the assumption that Jesse had led his colony at last to the site of the *Leyden*

[1] Even Major John W. De Forest, who was in all matters a careful and accurate historian, not only urged this theory in his book, already referred to, but wrote long articles to sustain his claim.

[2] Nicolaes van Wassenaer, the contemporary Dutch historian, in his Historical Account of all the Memorable Events in Europe, Asia and Africa, happening from 1621 to 1632, vol. VII, p. 11, under date of 1624, says: "The West India Company . . . equipped in the spring a vessel of 130 lasts, called the Nieu Nederlandt, whereof Cornelis Jacobsz May of Hoorn was skipper, with a company of 30 families, mostly Walloons, to plant a colony there. They sailed in the beginning of March, and directing their course by the Canary Islands, steered towards the Wild Coast, and gained the west wind which luckily [took] them in the beginning of May into the river called, first *Rio de Montagnes*, now the river Mauritius [Hudson River], lying in 40½ degrees."

Although we have van Wassenaer's authority for the statement that Mey steered toward the Wild Coast, he evidently did not stop at the Wyapoko or we should have read of it in the Journal. He may, however, have touched at the Essequibo, where there was a Dutch colony, or at the Caribbean Islands, where ships often stopped in passing.

Leyden great city where his own descendants were later domiciled seemed wholly reasonable.

We shall see what are the facts which the Journal and other recently discovered papers disclose to us.

On board the Pigeon It was on Saturday, July 1, 1623, that the pères de familles left Leyden, "that goodly and pleasant citie," as the Pilgrim Fathers had called it, embarking at Amsterdam with hearts full of hope and confidence that they would before long be at their desired haven. It was expected that a yacht, the Mackerel, which had already left Holland, would join the Pigeon, so that the two ships could sail together as far as the Amazon. From there the Mackerel was to go on to New Netherland. Both vessels hoped to accompany for a time a fleet which was on its way to Guinea to procure slaves — in fact, the date for the sailing of the Pigeon had been arranged expressly so as to secure this added protection. But an injury to the mast of the Mackerel necessitated delay, and the desired opportunity was lost. For a short time the two ships joined a fleet bound for Morocco under Captain Couast, but again the mast of the Mackerel gave way and she and the Pigeon were obliged to come to anchor.

On July 28th, being then anchored off the Downs, Kent County, they met Pieter Jansz of Flushing (probably an old friend) with the ship of which he had command. Pieter Fredericsz, the Master of the

Pigeon, invited Jansz and the Master of the Mackerel on board and entertained them well, after which a squabble arose between the Master of the Pigeon, who seems to have been a rather rough and quarrelsome kind of man, and his principal sailors. Harsh words were spoken on both sides, as a result of which seven of his minor officers and crew left him, and he had the greatest difficulty in filling their places. It thus became necessary to find a new surgeon to replace the one who had just left and that, too, caused an added delay, for the new surgeon wished to get married before sailing and then the Master had to give another feast in honor of him and his friends. So, what with contrary winds and one cause for delay following another, it was nearly two months after the voyagers set sail from Amsterdam before they rounded Cape Finisterre.

On board the Pigeon

Near Finisterre they descried another vessel and promptly gave chase. This was kept up till nightfall. Even then the Master wished to follow still farther in spite of the darkness and the disapproval of the pilot, but he was finally dissuaded. A few days later, still another sail was sighted and the Pigeon again started in pursuit, although this time the chase was more difficult, as there was no wind. The Master, however, was not to be discouraged by a trifle of that kind and all hands were put to work at the oars. On overhauling this ship, it was found that she was an English vessel returning from New-

On board the Pigeon

foundland. Holland and England were on friendly terms at this time, which one would think was reason enough for letting the ship alone, but those were days when all seafarers were more or less buccaneers, and the Master returned from his visit to the other vessel laden with provisions and with "much clothing taken from the chests of the sailors."

Then Jesse's righteous indignation was aroused and he asserted himself to the extent of insisting on the return of the clothes, which he evidently considered personal property. The pilot also asserted himself and accused the Master of delaying the voyage, contrary to his orders, by following the coast, presumably in search of booty. Thereafter the Pigeon was sailed on a more direct course, and all went well with the two ships until September 14th, when they were not far from the Island of Madeira. At that point, the wind being favorable, the Mackerel left the other vessel, laying her course, according to the Journal, for New Netherland.

Here it is worth while to pause for a moment in our narrative to follow the Mackerel to her anchorage in the Hudson River. Van Wassenaer, in his Historical Account, under date of April, 1624, speaks as follows regarding this vessel: "The yacht 'Maeckereel' sailed out last year 1623 on the 16th of June and arrived yonder [in New Netherland] on the 12th of December. That was indeed somewhat late but it wasted time in the savage islands, to

catch a fish (a Spanish prize), and did not catch it, so ran the luck." According to this statement, the yacht reached the Hudson River in December, and there we leave her for the winter months. *On board the Pigeon*

Meanwhile the New Netherland, as we know, was crossing the seas with the thirty families, "mostly Walloons," on board, and they arrived early in May in the bay below Manhattan Island. There they found a French vessel just about to claim the land in the name of the King of France, and there they also found the little yacht Mackerel, which van Wassenaer tells us "had lain above" in the Hudson River during the winter, but which in this most critical moment was opportunely on hand to aid in expelling the French intruder.

We have said that the date of the arrival of the New Netherland has for years been a subject of dispute among historians, some claiming that it was 1623 and some that it was 1624. Our Journal would clearly settle the date even were there no other positive proof, for from it we learn that the Mackerel left the Pigeon off the Island of Madeira in September, 1623, her objective point being New Netherland. The meeting with the ship New Netherland could not, therefore, have taken place until May, 1624, because it would have been manifestly impossible for the little Mackerel to have been in the harbor of Manhattan Island in May, 1623, and to have returned to Holland in time to have sailed

On board the Pigeon

from there on the sixteenth of June, 1623, according to van Wassenaer's contemporary testimony.

If we need further evidence, it is to be found in the first of five very important documents recently discovered — evidently contemporary copies of original West India Company records — which gives the full instructions sent over with Mey of the New Netherland for the conduct of the new colony. This paper is dated March, 1624, which further fixes the year, as no one seems to doubt the authenticity of these papers. They were signed by three members of the West India Company.[1] Unfortunately no list of the colonists is given.

We seem to have made a long digression in pursuit of information about this colony, but all these ramifications really have a very direct bearing upon questions concerning Jesse and his colonists; for although we know from the evidence of the Journal itself that our Jesse never came to New Netherland, it is by no means so certain that the signers of Jesse's Round Robin were not among the earliest colonists at New Amsterdam. We know them to have been mostly Walloons, and van Wassenaer tells us further that they were freemen — that is,

[1] The original records of the West India Company were destroyed about 1820 (see Brodhead and others), and the originals of these papers presumably shared the same fate. The manuscripts antedate any others now extant having reference to the settlement of New Amsterdam. These five documents were sold in Amsterdam in June, 1910.

On board the Pigeon

not connected with any special colony. That is all we know about them personally. The records of New Amsterdam for the first fifteen years are not in existence, but after these fifteen silent years we find mentioned in them many surnames which are also among the signatures on Jesse's Round Robin of 1621, his first list of colonists. Besides the names of de Forest and La Montagne, we find the following: Cornille, Campion, Catoir, Damont, De Carpentier, De Croy, De Crenne, Du Four, De la Mot, Du Pon, De Trou, Gaspar, Ghiselin, Gille, Lambert, Le Roy, Le Rou, Maton, Martin. This would seem to be somewhat more than a coincidence, but in default of any proof we cannot assert that the owners of these names belonged to the families whom Jesse "inscribed and enrolled." As far as the dates are concerned, it would even have been possible for the eight pères de familles, who, as we shall soon hear, returned from Guiana to Holland on the Pigeon, to have reached there in time to sail again on the New Netherland in the latter part of March, 1624; for they left the Wyapoko on January 1, 1624, and they could probably have crossed the Atlantic in less than two months.

But alluring as this theory is and even probable as it may be that some of Jesse's colonists were among the first settlers of New Amsterdam, we can assert of them only what the Journal tells us, and to that narrative we must now return.

On board the Pigeon

After the departure of the Mackerel, the Pigeon sailed onward alone, stopping occasionally at islands where the Master thought they might find fresh provisions. Some of the islands were uninhabited, but on one of them the voyagers saw large prairies on which herds of cows were grazing. The Master landed and conferred with the negro inhabitants, who promised him bucks and other provisions "to-morrow." When the morrow came, not an animal was in sight — they had all been driven into the mountains, — which proves that savages are not always so simple and trusting as their more sophisticated white friends.

Naturally, there are plenty of fish stories told in the Journal. Many flying fish fell upon the deck, and a seven-foot shark was caught, whose living family was discovered inside of it, but the most remarkable tale is that told of a little fish like a herring with a "flat head shaped like the moon." By the top of its head this little fish had attached itself to the belly of the shark and when the sailors put the little fish into an empty cask, it climbed out, aiding itself by the top of its head! Impossible as this tale seems, there really is a fish, the "Remora" or "Stay-fish," which is able to perform as remarkable gymnastics as those here described.

On October 16th, the ship, having now almost reached the equator, neared the North Cape, which was just north of the mouth of the Amazon. Here

On board the Pigeon

our company sighted another sail — and behold, it turned out to be that of Pieter Jansz of Flushing, whom they had left off the English Downs! The two ships entered the Amazon together on October 21st, fifty days after the Pigeon had left Plymouth.

Pieter Jansz had for years been in command of a trading vessel which made frequent voyages to the Wild Coast; for the early efforts of the Dutch were mainly devoted to trading. The factors who represented Dutch enterprise on this coast usually made an engagement for three years and trafficked on the different rivers. Their supplies were furnished to them periodically by merchants from Holland who brought them fresh goods, often of a very tawdry character, which were bartered with the natives for valuable products — annotta, letter-wood, or tobacco — which the Europeans thus obtained for almost nothing. Sir Walter Raleigh had met Jansz (or "Janson of Flushing," as he called him) at Cayenne in 1617 and said of him that he had "traded that place about a dussen years." No wonder that Jansz knew the tricks and could skilfully run himself on sandbars in the Amazon and so block the passage of the Pigeon that his own pinnace was enabled to go ahead and secure the best of the traffic. Pieter was a clever trader!

Along the Amazon

It is needless to describe the stay of the Pigeon on the Amazon except to say that the colonists spent about six weeks there exploring and trading.

Along the Amazon

This was not the first time colonists had gone to the Amazon or to the Wyapoko, which Jesse's party also explored. As early as 1595 Sir Walter Raleigh had made his famous voyage in search of Eldorado, which was supposed to be far inland, back of Guiana. In 1612 a Spaniard writing to his king told him, "There are forty houses of English and Flemings in the settlement, which I report to be on the river Guyapoco, and . . . there be eighty men in it, and they occupy themselves in sowing tobacco and cultivating it." The River Essequibo, in Guiana, was also from the first an attractive goal for the Dutch, and in 1616 a certain Captain Gromwegel from Zeeland arrived there with two ships and a galliote. He, it is said, "was the first man that took firme foteing on Guiana by the good liking of the natives." Gromwegel or his son continued in command on the Essequibo for over fifty years.

So it is less surprising to learn that our colonists found the Amazon rather crowded with English and Irish; there were indeed six such colonies on the river. There were constant rumors of belligerent Spanish ships near at hand, one Dutch vessel having recently been burned to save it from capture by these enemies, and it was known that there were also Spanish settlements up the river at Para.

On November 7th the Master asked the pères de familles if these places pleased them, and they answered, "No! not for settling families there," adding

Along the Amazon

that the Spaniards at Para, knowing that there were families living below them on the river, would surely "visit them to their death,"[1] especially as the Spaniards would have the aid of the flux and reflux of the tide in coming down the river and in returning. They thought it better to seek a place along the coast from which these enemies, should they attack the Walloon colony, could not return to the Amazon without going over as far as the Azores to pick up the wind. This would surely have a tendency to deter such attacks.

The Master vainly tried to induce the voyagers to start a settlement of their own on the Amazon or to remain there with the English colonists. Failing in this plan, he merely "made a compact" with the English in the name of the West India Company, after which he gave them a feast and had the cannon fired as a salute. It is worthy of notice that it was always the Master who gave these feasts.

On December 4th, after six weeks on the Amazon, our adventurers were back again at the North Cape, evidently bound for the Wyapoko River.[2] They explored the coast in their pinnace, and as they advanced, the scribe wrote full notes and drew outlines of the shores as seen from the ship. He also made

[1] Hartsinck, the historian, says that this is what the Spaniards did only two years later, killing off almost all the Dutch colonists on the Amazon.

[2] This river is now called the Oyapok and to-day forms the boundary between French Guiana and northern Brazil.

Along the Amazon

very interesting maps of the rivers up which they ventured, showing in each case the course of the vessel, the soundings, and the places of anchorage. Many of these maps and views were beautifully colored.[1]

The Tragedy in Guiana

Wyapoko River

At last, on December 16th, the Pigeon reached the mouth of the Wyapoko River and on the seventeenth came to anchor there. Opposite the ship's anchorage was Carippo, one of the settlements of the Yaos Indians, who received the colonists in a very friendly way and willingly furnished them with fresh provisions. This tribe occupied all the lower stretches of the river. Several of their rulers had had the advantage of visiting foreign countries; the "cacique" of Carippo had been in England for some years when he was a boy, and "Martin," as he was then called, had returned to his native land in 1608 with Robert Harcourt, a well-known English traveller. Harcourt lived at Carippo during his stay in the region, and he and Martin sometimes had good laughs together over the simplicity of the savages.[2]

Five or six leagues up the river, probably at Wyapoko Village, there was another Indian cacique who had lived for some time at Hoorn in Holland.

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[1] Four of these maps, one of them colored, are shown in the Journal, pp. 169–279 of Volume II.

[2] The Relation of a Voyage to Guiana. . . . Performed by Robert Harcourt. London, 1626.

He spoke excellent Dutch and sent friendly messages to our Dutch colonists.[1] No wonder, therefore, that the pères de familles felt almost as if they had arrived among friends! *Wyapoko River*

In the account of a voyager, Jean Mocquet, we hear of still another of these Indian travellers, a lad who was taken to France in 1604. He was to be the ruler of Yapoko (Wyapoko) when he became of age and was called "Yapoko." Meanwhile he insisted on going to France with Mocquet and there he had many interesting adventures, as may still be learned in the account of Mocquet's voyages.[2]

For ten days the colonists explored the river and its tributaries, finding much that pleased them and discovering many possibilities in the way of agriculture. On December 27th, after their return to the ship, the Master called the pères de familles together and formally asked them one by one "if they had found a place to their liking. They replied Yes! and that they wished to come and live there with their families."

Then followed a startling and wholly unexpected blow. The Master informed them that he had orders from the Directors of the West India Company to leave the pères de familles there, with the exception

[1] Wassenaer, Nicolaes van. Historical Account, vol. VI, pp. 68–70.

[2] Voyages en Afrique, Asie, Indes Orientales et Occidentales. Faits par Jean Mocquet. Rouen, 1665.

Wyapoko River of two, whom he should take back with him. They were all filled with consternation; not one of them had expected any such treatment. How were arrangements to be made for bringing over the families if only two of their number were allowed to return to Holland! They all "began in divers ways to excuse themselves," like the guests who were invited to the "great feast" described in the Bible.

Then the wise and self-sacrificing Captain said that he was willing to be one of those who should stay, if the Master would give to him, in the place of those pères de familles who wished to return, the same number of sailors. To this the Master agreed, and so, as the Journal says, "there remained with our said Captain, Louis le Maire [1] and I (from among

[1] Probably the son of Jacob le Maire, a Huguenot of Cambray, who fled with his family to Leyden about 1585. He had nine sons, most of whom were prominent in important commercial enterprises in different parts of the world.

Isaac, the eldest, became especially well known through his efforts to find a new passage to the Indies. The honor of being the first navigator to sail around Cape Horn fell to the lot of his eldest son, Jacques. The sea south of the cape the navigators thought was a strait and named it Strait le Maire.

It seems probable that Louis le Maire was a younger brother of Isaac. He was presumably born about 1580; and, if this date is correct, must have been five years old when his father came to Leyden and forty-three when he himself sailed with Jesse to Guiana. Being a member of a family of adventurers and seafarers, it is not surprising to find him one of the colonists who went to South America and to know that he was also one of the three who remained in Guiana after the other pères de familles had returned.

the families) and our gunner, four sailors and the surgeon's mate, nine persons in all." The person who called himself "I" was, of course, at that time the writer of the manuscript, and in view of the evidence was presumably Jean Mousnier de la Montagne. *Wyapoko River*

On December 28th, according to the record in the Journal of the departure of the pères de familles, "they prepared everything which they were willing to give us" — a quantity of cocoa, which is still one of the staple products of Guiana, some axes and knives (number not given), a small cannon,[1] and the pinnace which belonged to the Pigeon. A scanty outfit!

Before the ship sailed, the little company who were to be left moved across the river to Commaribo, a high mountain on the seashore just to the west of the mouth of the river, "a fruitful and pleasant enough place," where their friends the Yaos had a settlement.

There appears in the Journal, dated only five days after the Master's first statement of the Company's orders, the meagre entry, "The first day of the year 1624 our ship left to return to Holland." This was just six months after the departure of the colonists from Amsterdam. And it is all that we should now know about these brave men and their circumstances and plans for the future at precisely the time

[1] Probably such as was then called a "saker," in which was used a cartouche filled with stones or pieces of iron.

Wyapoko River when they were left by the ship, were it not for the invaluable Nicolaes van Wassenaer. In his Historical Account, dated in the margin December, 1623, he says, while telling of the Wyapoko, that the situation of that place might be learned from a letter sent in 1623 by some person then living there to a friend in Holland. He thus quotes the letter:[1] —

Although the letter from our Captain suffices to inform you both of the success of our voyage and the excellence of this region where we live, I will not neglect to fulfill the promise which I made at my departure. Our voyage was very happily concluded; it took us three months and a week to complete it; six weeks were spent in England and seven on the ocean, and thereafter we visited the Amazones and arrived at Wyapoko, which is the place where we now live. We found very friendly natives here, who treated us well; the streams are convenient and the land overflows with everything that is needed to support human life: good bread and fine fish. A cake of Cassavi, measuring one and a half feet across and containing enough food for six or seven people, is sold here for a coral, worth a farthing; the bread is superior to the best that is found in Holland. A hog sells for two knives of a stiver apiece; a deer for a hatchet of one shilling; a rabbit and a partridge for two farthings; a fish, as large as a cod-fish and of good flavor, for two farthings. Tree fruits have a much finer flavor than in the Netherlands. A man can live here on one crown a year better than on

[1] Wassenaer, Nicolaes van. Historical Account, vol. VI, pp. 68–70.

one hundred crowns in the Netherlands. We expect here the families from Holland; meanwhile, we shall diligently visit with our shallop the three rivers which flow into the gulf and through the adjoining country. *Wyapoko River*

We have advice from a captain of the savages, who at one time lived in Holland, at Hoorn, and who speaks good Dutch, five (Dutch) miles higher up in the country, along this river, where no Christian has ever been; we shall go there also, in the hope of finding something curious, which will be communicated to you likewise. Done in Wyapoko, the 31st of December.

Your friend, N. N.[1]

To this letter van Wassenaer added these words:

The families whom they expect are people going thither from Leyden; it is a beautiful paradise, where one can live well without working and sufficiently protect himself against all attacks. It were desirable if many Christians went thither, in order that the light of salvation might be revealed to the heathen who are plunged in darkness.

This well-situated land lies north of the equinoctial line; nothing is wanting there but the knowledge of God and his Son, who through the Holy Ghost bestows His blessings upon us. In this want the careful management of the West India Company will undoubtedly provide.

The letter from Wyapoko could not have been written by Jesse, because "our Captain" is mentioned in the text, and must therefore have been

[1] Nomen nescio.

Wyapoko River

from the hand of either La Montagne or le Maire —probably the former. How interesting it would be to us had "the letter from our Captain" been preserved as well! Might it not have been that the Captain's letter, as well as the one just quoted, which was presumably from La Montagne, was addressed to Marie du Cloux, Jesse's wife? After La Montagne's return to Leyden intimate relations were reestablished with Jesse's family there, and to whom would van Wassenaer be more likely to turn for information about Jesse and his colonists than to Jesse's wife?

Intense must have been the loneliness and yearning with which the three marooned pioneers and their companions watched the Pigeon sail away, carrying back to Holland and their loved ones there so many of those who had been their close comrades for the last six months.

Living as they did at the Indian village of Commaribo, which was situated "on a fertile mountain" overlooking the sea, they could easily see any ship which approached, and it must have been with great rejoicing that five days later they welcomed Pieter Jansz, whom they had last seen on the Amazon. Certainly he had outwitted them in trading with the natives at that time, but at all events he was a friend from home.

Our new settlers began ere long to explore the country in earnest, for which purpose they found the

pinnace most useful. There were a number of native houses on the shores of the river, all of them with thatched roofs and built on high piles, as may be seen in the picture which was made of the Wyapoko. The houses were undoubtedly thus elevated because, as we are told, there were marshes above the mouth of the river which were continually flooded. This elevation must also have been useful as a protection from wild animals. *Wyapoko River*

The Yaos, the nearest Indian neighbors of the newcomers, continued to be very friendly, so that when a good site farther up the river was proposed later for the settlers, it was deemed wise for them to remain where they were on account of the great affection which the Yaos had for them. In fact, so helpful were the natives usually that we read in an old account of the Amazon and the coast of Guiana: "The Christians take no pains nor labor for anything. The Indians house them, work for them and bring them victuals, receiving iron work or glass beads and such-like 'contemptible things' as reward."

We have plenty of evidence that Jesse, at any rate, was no such idler. He seems to have been a true leader and to have had a good deal of influence with the natives. An interesting example of his success in dealing with them is told in the Journal. It seems that the Caribs (of Cayenne) came on a visit to their friends the Yaos, and the next day there appeared, in canoes, a third tribe, the Aricoures from

Wyapoko River

the Cassipoure River, who were deadly enemies to the Caribs. The Yaos, being on friendly terms with both parties, were much troubled, for a battle between the hostile tribes seemed inevitable. Both sides prepared for action. Here was an opportunity for Jesse to exercise his powers as a peace-maker. He intervened, and with the aid of the Yaos prevailed upon the Caribs to desist, provided that the Aricoures should ask them to do so. The Journal continues: "Their ceremony was as follows: The Caribs obliged them [the Aricoures] to wait on the sea shore with their arms and [as the Caribs] fitted the arrow to the bow ready to let fly, the Aricoures took water and poured it on their heads. This done, the Caribs, throwing down their arms, rushed into the canoes of the others and embraced them." The Yaos, to celebrate a peace which had never before existed between Caribs and Aricoures, entertained them together for eight days.

Indians, however, were not the only neighbors of the colonists. An Englishman who had three negroes working for him lived on a near-by river, and a countryman of their own from the Texel, for the price of four axes, sold them a fine tobacco field not far off. When the necessities of hunger required or they had time to spare, they went hunting or fishing. Wild hogs and deer were very plentiful, and they also shot rabbits, partridges, etc. The fish caught in the stream were abundant and of excellent quality.

Wyapoko River

Jesse was indefatigable in exploring. He was always making long excursions and spying out the land. Splendid situations for cities and fortifications were found, and good tobacco fields, where the leaves of the plant were two and a half feet long and one foot broad. We have already said that Jesse was interested in all matters which pertained to the business of dyeing, and it was on these expeditions that he discovered the places especially advantageous for dyeing cotton and also various dye-woods, particularly oreillan,[1] from the seeds of which a valuable dye was obtained. The dye itself was called annotto or arnotto and produced a vivid red color known as "bastard scarlet." Perhaps the most valuable product from the point of view of the Dutch trader was the letter- or leopard- or speckle-wood.[2] This was a very remarkable wood of a rich brown color with curious black markings, as might be inferred from its names. It was as hard as ebony and weighed about eighty pounds to the square foot. It was then worth £30 or £40 sterling a ton, but it is now exceedingly rare. Near the mouth of the river, at both Commaribo and Carippo, valuable metals were found — golden marcasite[3] and other ores.

[1] Bixa orellana. Orellana is the name that was at first given to the Amazon after its discoverer, Francisco Orellana.

[2] Piratinera guianensis.

[3] A species of prismatic iron-pyrites. It was much used in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as a substitute for precious stones, being cut and faceted like rose diamonds.

Wyapoko River

These were indeed such treasures as the colonists had hoped to find when they first planned to emigrate to the Wild Coast.

In September Jesse visited the Caribs in their settlement at Cayenne. They received him very kindly, undoubtedly remembering his good services at the time when he averted their fight with the Aricoures.

Eight months had passed since the sailing of the Pigeon. Day followed day, each of them full of business, but on none did the ships arrive containing the families. Still, Jesse did not despair, and he was actively exploring when on October 13th "he had a sun stroke, as the sun was very strong that day." He fell in a faint in the canoe and thus they brought him back to his home. A severe fever ensued, and two days later, under advice from those who had lived in the country and understood its climate, they bled him. This gave him some relief, but as soon as he felt a little better he became impatient to resume his activities, to "go on the sea again," and having done so he experienced a second sunstroke with redoubled fever. Three days longer he suffered and then we find in the Journal this entry: "On the 22nd of October [1624] our said captain died, much regretted by the Christians and Indians who had taken a great liking to him." The same day his friends carried him to his grave, "as honorably as possible." After the burial each of them dis-

charged his gun three times over the grave, and they then ended the ceremonies by firing the cannon also. *Wyapoko River*

Thus we must leave Jesse the Walloon alone in his strange sepulchre, in the land of his hopes — the new world to which he had so ardently desired to lead a colony of his countrymen. He had planned, he had petitioned, he had waited. Finally he had set forth, not as he had wished but as he could. Here, too, he had been honorable and resourceful and self-sacrificing. Now the end had come — an end full of the irony of a great tragedy.

The Colonists' Return to Holland

Little remains to be told of the Guiana colony. With Jesse, their Captain, no longer there to lead them, various incidents occurred which show that they missed his judicious mind and steadying hand. One very wise decision they made about two months after Jesse's death. It was now almost a year since the Pigeon had left the little party of nine, including the three pères de familles, in Guiana. The Master of the Pigeon had then promised that the Directors would soon send over the families, and so the pères had waited as patiently as they could. Now, however, matters were becoming serious. Provisions and goods for barter were running low and there was no way to replace them. The Indians had been kind and helpful, but would they be as helpful when the supply of barter goods was exhausted? Their own

Wyapoko River

methods were to hunt or fish when they were hungry and to gather cotton, oreillan, and other products only when they really had some immediate use for them; but the Walloons needed more dependable aid than the Indians did and had to have more systematic plans for the future. They wrote: "Fearing that in time we should be obliged to force the Indians to give us food, we assembled the other Christians who were at Commaribo to consult together as to what we ought to do."

The assembled colonists decided without a dissenting voice that they should take immediate steps for departure while they still had stores on hand. This decision was reached on December 20, 1624. The most important thing to do was to reach the Caribbean Islands, where European ships touched frequently. On one of these ships they could probably get passage to Holland, or, even if that were not possible, they could there await the arrival of some of the West India Company's vessels, which it was known often stopped at the islands. But how were the colonists to get to the Caribbean Islands? The pinnace had seen much service and was by this time unseaworthy; and as for tools with which to make another, they had no saws — only axes and planes with which to build a seagoing craft!

Nevertheless, they were not to be daunted, and on January 1, 1625, they left Commaribo to find a suitable place up the river for building their boat.

Wyapoko River

There were ten of these amateur shipwrights — six of the company that had been left by the Pigeon and four other "Christians" who had joined them. They chose a place where the conditions were good for shipbuilding and natural provisions plentiful, and there they worked so industriously that in six weeks they had hewn "150 planks 20 feet long and 1 foot wide, with prow, knees and other necessary things." Then while some of the men gathered gum with which to pitch the boat, others stripped the bark off certain trees to make ropes. Meanwhile new sails were made from the men's hammocks; for necessity, as we know, is the mother of invention, and the cotton hammocks ("hamaka") which the Indian women made were wonderfully fine and strong.

In the midst of this important work a number of the builders went off to help the Yaos fight their enemies; but we, for our part, shall not leave the shipbuilding, in which we are so much concerned, in order to follow them, for the tale of the war is quite another story, and besides that, had Jesse been there, he would certainly not have approved of the pères de familles risking their lives thus needlessly at a time when so much depended on each one.[1]

[1] Other colonists had suffered seriously from aiding one Indian tribe against another, and the year that the Pigeon went to the Amazon some prosperous settlers there who had done this very thing had to be taken back to Holland through fear for their lives.

Wyapoko River Our colonists came back from their warlike expedition rather disgusted with the bloodthirsty natures of their friends the Yaos.

After their return the boat-building went bravely on. The keel was thirty feet long and the boat was to be thirty-six feet over all and twelve feet wide — about the proportions of the pinnace. When their boat was so far advanced that its builders hoped to launch it in three weeks, there suddenly appeared at their landing on May 23rd a boat full of Dutchmen! What was the meaning of this? Had they indeed not been abandoned? It transpired that this was the pinnace of the Flying Dragon,[1] a ship belonging to the Zeeland Chamber of the West India Company and commanded by Gelyn van Stapels of Flushing.

Van Stapels (who was immediately called "our Master") told the boat-builders that he had been with Vice-Admiral Lucifer on the Amazon, where they had been engaged in that greatly heralded "Conquest of Brazil." But, although the conquest was not as yet fully accomplished, he had come, according to the orders of the West India Company, to take the party, left by the Pigeon sixteen months ago, back to the Fatherland if they so desired. This, as the colonists said, "gave us great joy."

[1] The scribe called it the Green Dragon, probably because of its color. It was a ship of ninety tons, with ten cast-iron guns and six sakers.

Wyapoko River

As the new boat was not ready for launching, a raft was made from some of the left-over planks. On this the boat-builders placed all their clothing and the irons from the dilapidated pinnace, and so it was floated down the river. At Commaribo they collected the remainder of their stores, and after, let us hope, bidding farewell to the friendly savages, they gladly set sail on May 28, 1625, from the Wyapoko on the Flying Dragon.

On board the Flying Dragon

The ship sailed to the north along the coast to join Admiral Lucifer, then awaiting them on the Essequibo River. As they passed Cayenne, their friends the Caribs brought them some of the precious "letter-wood" and a turtle which weighed five hundred pounds. On August 3rd they reached Surinam, where they learned that the Admiral was still at Essequibo, and thither van Stapels went for orders. The Admiral then decided to transfer his command to the Flying Dragon and to send his own ship, the Black Eagle, back to Holland with the colonists and all the accumulated merchandise which his people had derived from trade.

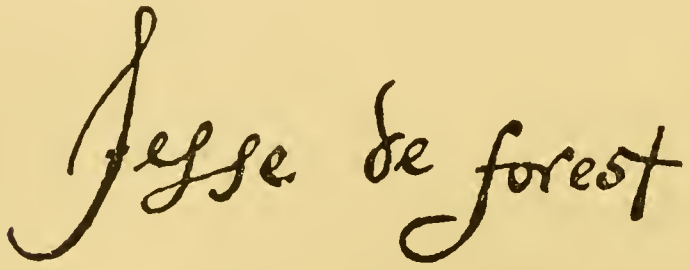
On board the Black Eagle

After all this unloading and reloading had been accomplished, our friends, with Gelyn van Stapels still their Master, were put aboard the Black Eagle to return to their homes. The two ships sailed northward together past Tobago and through the Leeward and Windward (or Caribbean) Islands. At St. Vincent Admiral Lucifer and the Flying Dragon

On board the Black Eagle

parted from the Black Eagle, the latter pursuing her northerly course with the eager band of returning voyagers on board.

September 24th found the Black Eagle to the east of Sombrera Island, and the note to this effect is the last entry in their record except the final one: "On the 16th of November [1625] we arrived at Flushing" — an entry which concluded with the devout ejaculation, "for which God be praised."



III

JESSE DE FOREST'S CHILDREN

Preparing to Emigrate

WHAT had been happening in Leyden during the absence of Jesse de Forest's colonists? According to all accounts, Leyden had been by no means a "goodly and pleasant citie" in which to dwell, for during 1624 and 1625 the plague had raged with great violence. Poor Marie du Cloux with her five children no doubt had spent many anxious hours. Then, her disappointment must have been hard to bear when in 1624 eight of the pères de familles returned from Guiana, having left her husband in that far-away land. Her husband's brother, Gerard, was devoted to her, for he and Jesse had been very close to each other and to each other's families. In fact, one of Jesse's last acts before leaving home had been to be a witness at the baptism of Gerard's son Jeremie. *Leyden*

After Jesse's departure his privilege as "dyer in colors" in Leyden had been transferred to Gerard, the latter having stated to the magistrate on or about December 21, 1623, that his brother, Jesse de Forest, "who by virtue of your admission had dyed wools and camlets in this city, removed from here by the last ships which sailed from here for the West

Leyden Indies; and accordingly he the petitioner would be glad to be employed in dyeing in colors." This request was made nearly six months after Jesse had sailed for Guiana. It was formally granted on January 4, 1624, and Gerard in consequence had a more important standing in the community.

So matters progressed in Leyden until November 16, 1625, when the Black Eagle arrived at Flushing with La Montagne on board, Louis le Maire also, presumably, and the six members of the crew of the Pigeon who had remained with Jesse; but with no returning husband for Marie du Cloux, no successful founder of a Protestant Walloon colony in the New World! After the return of the Black Eagle Marie du Cloux is referred to in the Leyden records as a widow, and Jesse's name never appears again in church or city documents.

La Montagne undoubtedly did his best to comfort her with stories of her husband's wisdom and courage. She was then living on the Voldersgraft, not far from the university; and as La Montagne intended again to join that institution, he evidently found it convenient and pleasant to become an inmate of her household.

Here he met Rachel de Forest, the only one of Jesse's daughters who was then living at home. La Montagne was at this time thirty-one years old and Rachel could not have been over seventeen, but he was still an *homme à marier*, as he had called himself

five years before when he signed the Round Robin. *Leyden*
Considerable as was the difference between their ages, there were forces at work so potent that they overcame this obstacle to a union, and on December 12, 1626, at the Walloon church in Leyden, Rachel de Forest and Jean Mousnier de la Montagne were married. The bridegroom's witness was his "friend," Gerard de Forest, and Rachel's was her aunt, Hester de la Grange, Gerard's wife. The following year, 1627, a son, Jolant, was born to them.

By this time the fever was once more upon La Montagne — the fever of the explorer and the pioneer; he felt that he must again visit those tropical regions where his experiences, it would seem, had been such as to deter him from another venture. The object of his yearning was Tobago, one of the Windward Islands, northwest of Guiana, and then owned by the Dutch. La Montagne must have seen this island when the Black Eagle was on its way north from Guiana.

As three of Jesse de Forest's children,[1] Rachel among them, made their homes later in America, it is our purpose to follow the footsteps of each as far as is now possible. We must therefore tell of the setting forth of La Montagne and his young wife, possibly with little Jolant, on their voyage to the West Indies. They probably sailed on the Fortuyn,

[1] For genealogical notes of Jesse's children, see Appendix, p. 283.

On board the Fortuyn

commanded by La Montagne's old friend, Gelyn van Stapels, which left Zeeland on March 3, 1628, bound for the Island of Tobago.[1] Besides the crew there were on board sixty-three colonists with "their implements."

On May 4th the ship touched at St. Vincent, and here a rather curious incident occurred, which obliges us to pause for a little retrospect before continuing our tale. It will be remembered that it was the Zeeland Chamber of the West India Company which had sent a ship to Guiana to bring back Jesse's colonists, should they so desire. La Montagne and le Maire thus finally reached Flushing in November, 1625, after the many privations of their prolonged and unfortunate stay on the Wyapoko. It is therefore rather surprising to learn that only a year later a certain Jan van Ryen obtained permission from the same Zeeland Chamber to take out a band of colonists to the Wyapoko River. Admiral Lucifer was put in command of a fleet of three ships which were to carry the expedition, of which one was the Flying Dragon, with Gelyn van Stapels still in charge. They set sail on January 23, 1627.[2] In due time they landed about eight miles above Carippo, on the Wyapoko River, possibly at Wyapoko Village, and Captain Jan van Ryen was left at the

[1] De Laet, Johannes. Annual Report of West India Company, 1628.

[2] Ibid.

new settlement as governor of his people. According to the historian Hartsinck's account, however, "this colony did not last long." The savages rose against the new settlers, killed their governor (Jan van Ryen), and demolished their houses; but, after some further trouble, the Indians became sufficiently pacified so that the "Christians" were able to build a few sloops in which to betake themselves elsewhere.

On board the Fortuyn

When in 1628 the Fortuyn arrived at St. Vincent, the outward bound colonists found there two Dutchmen, the remnant of Jan van Ryen's unlucky band, who had succeeded in reaching this island. These men said that in their sloop there had been at first seven men, but that two had died at sea; and of the rest three, who were French, had in turn met their end when the sloop encountered savages from the Island of Grenada, who were on bad terms with the French. Thus the two Dutchmen at St. Vincent who had escaped were apparently the only survivors of van Ryen's colony.

Did La Montagne, hearing all this, feel that by mere chance he had escaped a like fate on the Wyapoko or did he consider that under the wise and considerate treatment of the natives by Jesse de Forest's colony such a catastrophe could not have occurred? As a matter of fact, the colony with which he was now emigrating to Tobago lasted only until 1637, when it was destroyed by Caribs and Spaniards!

Tobago Rachel's heart must have sunk within her as she listened to the tales of these survivors of van Ryen's settlement and she must have dreaded the life she was about to begin in her new home at Tobago. The climate of this island was said to be very trying to northerners, the reason, perhaps, why little Jolant (if indeed he had accompanied his parents) "died young." A little brother, Jesse, came in 1629 to take Jolant's place. Apparently he was born in Tobago, for it was only in 1631, two years later, when still another baby was expected, that Rachel, then only twenty-one years old, probably having found her previous experience too terrible, returned with little Jesse to her Dutch home, her husband remaining in Tobago. Her third son, who was named Jean after his father, was born in Leyden. La Montagne returned to this city, presumably in 1633, for here his first daughter, little Rachel, was born the following year.

Leyden The university still held attractions for La Montagne; on March 3, 1636, he joined it for the third time. But this tranquil student life was again to be interrupted, as we shall hear presently, for new schemes were soon proposed by Rachel's uncle, Gerard, and she, true to family traditions, was once more ready to join in projects for emigration.

Rachel was not the only one of Jesse's children who early ventured across the seas. Her brother

Henry (Hendrick de Foreest, as the Dutch called him), who was three years her elder, began his career as sailor and pioneer in 1631, when he was twenty-five years old. In telling of Hendrick's adventures we are fortunately able to avail ourselves of some newly published material, the "Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts." [1] In these papers, which comprise Kiliaen van Rensselaer's [2] letter books from 1634 to 1643, as well as other important documents, notably the Log of the Yacht Rensselaerswyck (1636–37), we find many items regarding Gerard de Forest and his nephew Hendrick, and an account of the voyage in 1636 of the Rensselaerswyck, in which Jesse de Forest's children — Hendrick, Rachel, and Isaack — sailed for New Amsterdam. *Leyden*

To appreciate the situation in New Netherland at this time, it is necessary to give some further details regarding the affairs of the West India Company and its patroons. This company, as we have heard, obtained its charter in June, 1621, from the States General of the Netherlands. In June, 1629, it issued a "Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions" for "patroons, masters, or private persons who will plant any colonies in, and send cattle to, New Nether-

[1] Recently translated and edited in a most able manner by A. J. F. van Laer, the State Archivist at Albany, New York.

[2] A prominent merchant at Amsterdam, a director of the West India Company, and a patroon of New Netherland. His colony, "Rensselaerswyck," was near Fort Orange (Albany, New York).

Leyden land." Only those were to be called "patroons" who agreed to plant in New Netherland "a colony of fifty souls, upwards of fifteen years old, within the space of four years." Many privileges would be granted to them and excellent locations for settling, but they were warned that the Company reserved for itself the "island of Manhattes."

Kiliaen van Rensselaer was the most prominent of these patroons and the only one whose colony survived even as long as until 1643. Van Rensselaer had business relations with Gerard de Forest and so it was probably through his uncle Gerard's influence that Hendrick de Forest came into the service first of the patroons and later of the West India Company.[1] The earliest suggestion of such employment of which we have any record is in connection with the whaling industry at Swanendael, a tract of land on the west shore of the "bay of the South River" (Delaware Bay).[2]

The history of the Swanendael colony is as follows: There were five patroons interested in it, with three of whom — Kiliaen van Rensselaer, Captain David de Vries, and Johannes de Laet, the historian — we are already acquainted. These patroons, wishing to establish a settlement on the South River,

[1] See Hendrick's declaration, September 10, 1636, Appendix, p. 352.

[2] This bay was said to be full of whales, in proof of which it was alleged that all the Indians in the vicinity wore in their hair feathers made from whalebones.

sent thither on December 12, 1630, a large trading ship of three hundred tons burden, Den Walvis (The Whale), with twenty-eight colonists. The ship arrived on the South River early in 1631, and the settlers, after building suitable fortifications, engaged in whaling and farming. "Gilles Houset, sailor," was in charge. Unfortunately that same year, through a blunder on Houset's part, the Indians got into the fort and "all the people and the animals were," according to the record, "lamentably killed, whereby they [the patroons] suffered incalculable damage"![1] One would think that the people who had been "lamentably killed" really suffered the "incalculable damage"! Everyone was horrified at this catastrophe. Kieft, afterward Director-General of New Netherland, in alluding to the fate of the Dutch settlers, spoke of the tragic experiment as one which had been unhappily "sealed with our blood." *Leyden*

Meanwhile the patroons in Amsterdam, not knowing of this sad event, were preparing to send The Whale on a second voyage to the South River, and on December 19, 1631, engaged Hendrick de Forest at thirty guilders per month to go to Swanendael and there take the place of Gilles Houset. The patroons were disappointed because the voyage of the previous year had not been a very paying one and this year they planned to send as an escort to The Whale, a *Amsterdam*

[1] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., pp. 196, 240, and 241.

Amsterdam yacht, The Little Squirrel (only seventy-five tons burden). A yacht was often sent in those days as an escort to a larger ship. The ships were usually large and unwieldy, whereas the yachts were swift-moving, easily managed vessels which could be readily used for attack or defense. In fact, the word *Jaght* denoted swiftness or chasing. A yacht would therefore be used as the defender of a large ship. In this particular instance the names of the ships rather amusingly indicate the difference in their size and agility. Captain de Vries was himself to take command of both ship and yacht and was to act as patroon as well.

On February 12th the new agreement was entered into by the patroons and the ships were made ready; but before they left the Texel news of the disaster at Swanendael was received and their departure was delayed for a time. This might well have been a relief to Hendrick, but he was apparently not frightened. Men were always in danger in those days, if not from Indians, then from Spaniards or Turks or pirates or wild beasts. Like all other sailors or adventurers, he was ready cheerfully and carelessly to take chances. The Swanendael patroons felt differently, however, and the ships did not sail for several months. Hendrick, however, considered himself to be definitely engaged, and so for five months he waited patiently. Then at last his chance came. In May the patroons determined to send over the ships,

after all, but these were first to visit the West India Islands and not to reach the South River until December, when the whales would begin to come in. Accordingly it was decided that Hendrick de Forest should "be employed for whatever he should be found capable of performing," but nothing further was said as to his compensation. *Amsterdam*

The two ships, The Whale and The Little Squirrel, sailed on May 24, 1632, de Vries in command, but ill luck came to them at the very start.[1] While de Vries was resting, the large vessel, the "vierman," or trader, as he calls it, became unmanageable on the banks before Dunkirk and was "tossed about on the banks for nearly 2 hours with great danger of losing the ship." Most of the crew jumped into the shallops, abandoning the vessel. The pilots of both ships, as de Vries says, "dared not leave me for shame, seeing that I remained aboard with eight or nine raw hands. . . . Those men," he added, "who had appeared fierce as lions, were the first to escape in the boat." At last, "bumping and tossing along," the ship got off, after which the crew again came aboard. The big trader was taken to Portsmouth for repairs, and it was late in June before she was ready again to set forth. *On board The Whale*

Hendrick was at first made the "voorleezer" or

[1] De Vries, David Pietersz. Voyages from Holland to America, 1632–1644 (1632, May 24). See also Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 198.

On board The Whale

"person to offer up prayers," who, when there was no regular parson, "caused the people to assemble every Sunday to train them in the commandments, the psalms, the reading of the Holy Scriptures and Christian authors, in modesty, love and decency." A voorleezer usually "tuned the psalm." [1]

Shortly after sailing it was found necessary to fill an even more important position than that of voorleezer. The steward proved to be a drunkard, and Hendrick was appointed "commis of the victuals" in his place. Hendrick himself says that he, the deponent, "observed his duties faithfully with all diligence . . . taking his turn at the wheel . . . and observed his duty faithfully in everything with which he was charged."

On September 11th the ships dropped anchor in the roadstead of the Island of St. Martin. Apparently de Vries' object in coming to St. Martin had been the acquisition of a cargo of salt, and so all hands were set to work at the new duty of collecting it. Hendrick among the rest was kept busy "going out with expeditions and mounting guard . . . working in the saltpans in his turn and having carted salt." On October 27th the cargo of salt was complete and de Vries prepared to sail for Nevis to take in wood and water.

[1] Alice Morse Earle called him a "general utility man who was usually precentor, schoolmaster, bell ringer, sexton, grave digger, and even town clerk."

Hendrick had now been under the orders of de Vries for five months and eight days, and whether he did not like de Vries or found his combined duties of voorleezer and "commis of the victuals" too onerous, as well might be the case, he desired a change. One of the West India Company's ships happened to be in the harbor of St. Martin, and with the approval of de Vries, Hendrick left the employ of the Swanendael patroons and went into that of the West India Company. The subsequent shabby conduct of the patroons of Swanendael in regard to paying him certainly justified his decision to leave their employ. They gave him nothing whatever for the more than ten months during most of which he had worked hard and faithfully in their interests, and he was obliged, years later, during his own absence, to get his uncle Gerard to sue them for the amount due him.[1]

On board The Whale

After Hendrick left de Vries at St. Martin we hear nothing more about him until four years have elapsed. We presume, however, that he continued to follow the sea, for when we next find him, he is acting as mate on board a ship.

Westward Again

It was in 1636 that three of Jesse's children — Hendrick, Rachel, and Isaack — took the decisive step of leaving their Dutch home and seeking a

Amsterdam

[1] Hendrick de Forest's Declaration. Appendix, p. 352.

Amsterdam permanent one for themselves on the other side of the Atlantic. It was fifteen years since their father had planned his Virginia colony and thirteen since he had sailed on the fateful voyage to Guiana, but the two lads, who were only seventeen and seven years old when their father left them, knew even then that his fixed purpose had been the founding of a home for them in the New World and that to emigrate was the family destiny.

Their opportunity came in the fall of 1636 when Kiliaen van Rensselaer determined to send a ship to New Netherland, of which, as we know, he was one of the patroons. Previous to this time he had established a colony called Rensselaerswyck, on the Hudson River at Fort Orange, and to it he now planned to send a ship of his own with settlers, cattle, and merchandise. But Kiliaen found that private ships were expensive luxuries; in a certain letter he says: "As the equipment of this ship ran too high for me I granted Gerrit de foreest a half interest in it (aside from the goods and people of the colony)." [1]

A formal contract was signed on August 8, 1636,[2] by Kiliaen van Rensselaer and Gerard de Forest. According to its terms each partner was to be directly responsible for his half of the expenses, but each was also to be allowed to have a certain num-

[1] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 328.

[2] Contract, Appendix, p. 350. Also Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., letter, p. 323.

THE PATROON, KILIAEN VAN RENSSELAER

Owned by Dr. Howard Van Rensselaer of Albany, a direct descendant

ber of "associates." A small ship was to be bought, armed, and equipped on joint account and a cargo was to be purchased on the same terms. In consideration of Kiliaen's conveying so many of his own colonists and so much merchandise for Rensselaerswyck on the ship, Gerard and his associates were to be allowed to share in Kiliaen's rights as "Patroon of New Netherland." [1] *Amsterdam*

After arrival at the Manhattans a suitable warehouse was to be found wherein to store the merchandise. The goods received in exchange were to be stored in the same building. If the crew discovered any "minerals, pearls, fisheries, salt pans or anything else," a liberal reward was to be paid to the finder but the find was to belong to the joint owners of the vessel. The partnership was to continue for a year.

The ship purchased was not large; Kiliaen spoke of it usually as "my yacht" or "my little ship," and it was appropriately named Rensselaerswyck. The supercargo was Dirck Corssen Stam; the skipper, Jan Tiepkesz Schellinger; the mate and trader, Hendrick de Forest; and there were also twelve men

[1] These rights, "Freedoms," as they were called, would therefore allow Gerard to "sail and traffic along the entire coast from Florida to Terre-neuf and also . . . to sail to the West Indies for timber, salt, and other merchandise in accordance with the Rules and Regulations" — that is, he would be obliged to pay to the West India Company five per cent on the value of these articles.

Amsterdam in the crew. In this yacht Kiliaen planned to send, as he wrote to his agent, "38 persons whom I have engaged for my colony . . . among whom are six women & several children, while some still expect to give birth on the way."

Gerard was now able to be of real service to his brother's children. It was very likely he who had suggested Hendrick for the position of mate on the Rensselaerswyck, although Hendrick, as we know, had previously been in the employ of the Swanendael patroons, of whom van Rensselaer was one. Uncle Gerard was also able to offer to other members of the family an opportunity to sail for New Amsterdam. Isaack de Forest availed himself of the chance, as did his sister Rachel, with her husband, La Montagne, and their three children. Jan,[1] Jesse de Forest's eldest son, apparently did not care to go. He was glad, however, to invest some of his savings in the enterprise and promised to provide fl.800. He was evidently one of Uncle Gerard's "associates."

There were, we are told, fifty-two or fifty-three souls on the ship who must be "kept dry," [2] which number could not therefore have included the sailors. Consequently, if Kiliaen van Rensselaer

[1] He had been married in 1633 to Maria Vermeulen and was now comfortably established as a merchant in Leyden, living on the Haerlemerstraet.

[2] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 360.

was sending thirty-eight settlers to Rensselaerswyck Gerard must have been responsible for the fourteen remaining passengers. There were six members of Gerard's own family aboard, not counting Hendrick, the mate, and there were also on board two good practical men, by name Tobias Teunissen and Willem Fredericks Bout, whom he had engaged to aid his nephews in their new undertaking. Both men were natives of Leyden; Teunissen, a wool-washer, was a man of middle age and a widower, while Bout was a lad of sixteen, who afterward became a carpenter. They both contracted to "serve said De Forest, or his agent, three successive years after arriving in New Netherland." *Amsterdam*

The de Forests and La Montagne were to be "freemen" or "free merchants" in New Netherland, which meant that they were not bound to any special colony and could live where they pleased in New Netherland, provided they did not select a site near the property of a patroon.

When it was really decided that the ship was to sail, great preparations were to be made and no time was to be lost. Kiliaen had to select the goods for his cargo: merchandise of all kinds — dry goods, hardware, seeds, agricultural implements, tools, harness, etc. — but by far the most expensive item was a "brandy still, weighing one hundred and fifteen pounds, with condensing coil," which cost fl.94.17. Perhaps this was sent as an economical

Amsteraam measure, as the brandy sent over earlier had "wasted very much." All these stores, as well as the ship, were insured at six per cent, and the value of the ship with its equipment, cargo, and stores was great for those days.

The ship with the equipment	fl.5706	
The cargo.....	7840	
The food stores	1930	
Total.....	fl.15476	(over $6000)

Then the cost of board for the passengers had to be adjusted. It was set "at 6 stivers [12 cents] a day as long as the voyage shall last," although Kiliaen acknowledged that the actual cost would be less than five stivers. A long letter was written to Wouter van Twiller, Kiliaen's nephew, then the Director-General at New Amsterdam. Another letter was sent to Kiliaen's agent in New Netherland, in which he was especially urged to aid the freemen then being sent out: "You will accommodate them as best you can and assist them to earn their bread with honor, and see that each one according to his thrift may prosper a little in order that others may not be discouraged but attracted thereby." [1]

Finally the supercargo, Dirck Corssen, was carefully instructed as to the landing and storing of the goods at New Amsterdam. Kiliaen then owned a farm there, and the supercargo was told that he might put the goods in the barn on this farm or rent

[1] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 327.

MODEL OF A TRADING SHIP OR YACHT, PROBABLY OF THE SAME TYPE AS THE RENSSELAERSWYCK, ABOUT 1636

Owned by Sir William Van Horne, Montreal

a warehouse in which to store them, or even, if necessary, erect a shed for them. *Amsterdam*

So Kiliaen was full of business; for him it was only business, but for poor Hendrick de Forest the voyage meant separation and heartache as well! Less than three months before the day set for sailing, Hendrick, who apparently was then living in Amsterdam, married a young girl there, Gertrude Bornstra by name, whose family came from Friesland. The wedding had taken place on July 1, 1636, and must have been a charming one; for on this occasion there had been two brides and two bridegrooms, Hendrick and his cousin Crispin (Gerard's son) marrying two sisters on the same day, while Gerard acted as witness for both the young men. And now Hendrick was called upon to leave his young bride, for it had evidently been deemed wiser for her to wait in Amsterdam until her husband had prepared a home for her on the other side of the ocean.

At last, on September 25, 1636, the ship set sail from Amsterdam.[1] The letters written at this time by the seafarers were full of pious ejaculations (such as "God preserve Rensselaers Wyck!"), which did not prevent their running immediately into very heavy weather. For six weeks they were tossed about in the Channel, while the log recorded such terrible items as the following: "The waves rose to *On board the Rensselaerswyck*

[1] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 355. Log of the ship Rensselaerswyck.

On board the Rensselaerswyck

such an awful height that the waves and the sky seemed one"; "the beak of our ship was knocked to pieces"; "the overhang above our rudder was knocked in"; "it seemed as if we would capsize or all our sails blow away"; and finally, "having few provisions for 52 or 53 souls, the number on board to keep dry, we could oppose it no longer. In the first place, on account of the sick people whose number increased daily because of their hardships and, in the second place, because we feared that it might last a long time yet."

The weather was so terrible that although the ship had already passed Cape Finisterre, France, it was decided, after a conference of the skipper, supercargo, mate, and other advisers, to try to run into the harbor of Falmouth or Plymouth. They made an effort to get back of Cape Cornwall, but, as the log says, "We got aground near the Cape and at twilight our foresail blew away, for we were obliged to carry all the sail we could, and our mainsheet broke and we allowed ourselves to be driven to the north with one sail, but in the second watch the mainsail had to be taken in too, for it was no longer possible to carry any sail."

The following day the log reads: "We decided that we could do no better than to run to the anchorage or land which we saw and thought must be a harbor. . . . Commending ourselves to God, we ran toward it with reefed foresail."

On board the Rensselaerswyck

The next morning, November 16th, they found themselves in the harbor of Ilfracombe, Devonshire. In the midst of all this stress a little boy was born, who was appropriately named "Storm," a name to which he afterwards added the words, "van der Zee."

The passengers, not having "enjoyed board" any more than they had enjoyed the storm, were glad enough to go on shore, where, alas, further misfortune awaited them. The blacksmith's helper, whom the patroon was sending to the colony, quarrelled with his master and finally killed him; and although the officers of the ship immediately delivered the murderer to the authorities, the latter insisted on mooring the ship and then took away the rudder so that the Rensselaerswyck could not escape. This incident and the continued bad weather kept them in port eight additional weeks, and it was not until early in January that the wind became more favorable and they had thoughts of setting forth once more.

Meanwhile Kiliaen, at home in Holland, was much worried about his yacht, especially as day followed day and no news came. At first he said, "The danger is largely within the first two or four days. After that the danger is not so great." On October 15th, he hoped that "our ship has already passed the channel." He thought that the entire voyage would not last over three months. Little did he

On board the Rensselaerswyck

know that it would be three and a half months after they left Amsterdam before the ship would be able to escape from the horrors of the English Channel.

Another thing gave Kiliaen much anxiety. Gerard would not or could not pay the remainder of his share of the expenses. He still owed over fl.4,000. At first Kiliaen spoke him fair and asked him to "please exert further diligence"; then he entreated him. Sometimes he wrote day after day, but he was always polite, urging him at one time, "Do not sleep on this but please satisfy me and answer at once." He was constantly dunned by his creditors; as he said, "I am ashamed." At another time he said, "I am in much need of money on account of a large quantity of pearls which I have bought." On these he could get a rebate if he paid cash. Gerard paid part of his own share promptly, but his associates were the ones mainly at fault. His nephew Jan was especially delinquent; when a whole year had gone by, Jan still owed his fl.800 and Gerard owed a small balance.

But we have left the seafarers waiting all too long, for when we last spoke of them the wind was becoming more favorable. On January 8, 1637, Stam, Schellinger, and de Forest wrote their last joint letter to the patroon. They gave him scanty news but said, "Thank God, we are all of us still hale and hearty and agree well with one another." Schellinger wrote to his "Worthy, well, and dearly

CANNON FROM THE RENSSELAERSWYCK, WITH ITS SHIP-MADE GUN CARRIAGE

Owned by Eugene Van Rensselaer

beloved wife," giving her even less news but plentiful good advice about the bringing up of the children — details which, it would seem, should have been already attended to. Hendrick also during this time of enforced idleness wrote letters to Gertrude Bornstra, but she seems to have kept the contents to herself.

On board the Rensselaerswyck

Then, all things being ready, the yacht on January 9th again set sail, but it took them two months more to reach their destination. During the voyage to the southward the crew and perhaps the passengers also occupied themselves with making gun-carriages for four of the cannon which they carried on board. One of these cannon with its ship-made gun-carriage was afterward taken to Rensselaerswyck and is still in the possession of the patroon's descendants.

In the vicinity of Madeira an evidently hostile sail came in sight, but the voyagers, conscious of their four cannon, felt no alarm. They cleared away the chests and cows "with which the deck was encumbered" — where *did* they put the chests and especially the cows? — after which preparation to meet the enemy they "waited for him with furled sails." The vessel turned out to be a "Frenchman," whose captain declared that he came from La Rochelle and was "looking for good booty." Captain Schellinger answered that they were "also looking for a good prize," and for about an hour the

On board the Rensselaerswyck

two ships remained, as it were, glaring at each other; then, although the Frenchman had four iron cannon and two of other metal while the Rensselaerswyck had but four in all, the former "headed for the west when each of us fired a salute."

The following day, January 25th, Rachel La Montagne's little daughter, Marie, was born — a new pilgrim seeking a home in the New World.

Nothing very exciting happened during the remainder of the voyage. According to the usual custom, the ship sailed as far south as the Canaries before turning to the west, in order to catch the trade winds. During the entire voyage the navigator calculated time by the hour-glass, "four glasses" representing two hours — not a very accurate method, one would think.

At length, on March 1st, the Rensselaerswyck, surrounded by an escort of whales, "some ten or twenty swimming for at least two hours about our ship," approached her destination. On the same day the skipper anchored "behind Godyn's Point" (Sandy Hook) and entered in the log the fervent exclamation, "God be praised for his mercy." The wind not being favorable, the vessel remained where it was for a few days and the ship's boat took some of the passengers ashore "for the purpose of shooting geese." On March 5, 1637, the ship anchored off "Manatans."

The Muscoota Bouweries

New Netherland

Our voyagers had now arrived at the port where they wished to be, and after so long a period of enforced idleness a time of great activity ensued. Every one was in a bustle, for each had something of immediate importance to attend to. The women and children were landed, the marketable goods were stored, the empty water-casks were brought ashore for re-filling, the babies born during the voyage (little Marie La Montagne among the rest) were baptized, and, last but not least, the widow of the smith who had been murdered at Ilfracombe three months before was married to Arent Steffeniersz, a fellow-voyager who was also one of the patroon's colonists. Since Hendrick de Forest was trader or merchant as well as mate, to him was entrusted the sale of all the goods not needed at Rensselaerswyck, which Schellinger had brought on shore and deposited in a house. The yacht, after all the business connected with it was completed, sailed up the river to Rensselaerswyck with the patroon's colonists and was gone nearly three months.[1]

Meanwhile Hendrick and Isaack, the former now thirty-one years old and the latter ten years his junior, lost no time in seeking a favorable situation for a plantation. They came prepared to earn their living by raising tobacco, for which it was said the

[1] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., pp. 375–379.

New Netherland

soil of Manhattan Island "on account of its great fertility was considered well adapted." A stretch of rich bottom land in the northern part of the island was soon selected. This tract was called "Muscoota" [1] (the flat land) by the Indians, who had doubtless already cleared and cultivated a considerable part of it.

Hendrick promptly secured from Director van Twiller a "grant" [2] of one hundred morgens of land (about two hundred acres) on this fertile plain, extending "between the hills and the kill"; that is, to give approximate boundaries, from the high land we know as Morningside Heights to a little stream now called Harlem Creek, which rose not far from the present Mount Morris Park and ran in a southerly and easterly direction until it emptied into the Harlem River. The northern boundary of the tract was at about 124th Street, while on the south it included the high land in Central Park at about 109th Street. Near this latter boundary was a copi-

[1] For a brief note on Muscoota see Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, procured in Holland, England, and France by J. R. Brodhead. Vols. I–X and index volume edited by E. B. O'Callaghan. Vols. XII–XIV edited by B. Fernow. Albany, 1855–61 and 1877–83 [commonly called New York Colonial Documents], vol. XIV, p. 11.

[2] A verbal grant was all that was necessary in the very earliest days, but settlers were led to expect that a ground brief would be given to them after they had held and improved their land for two years. The period was often, however, much longer.

HARTGER'S VIEW OF NEW AMSTERDAM, REVERSED AND ENLARGED BY J. H. INNES

NEW AMSTERDAM ABOUT THE TIME OF ISAACK'S ARRIVAL

The drawing must have been made before 1643, for the Church in the Fort, finished in that year, is not shown. New York Public Library, New York City

ous spring, or, as the Dutch called it, "fonteyn," which still flows almost as it did then, a rippling brook with little waterfalls, until it empties into Harlem Mere in the northern part of the park. *New Netherland*

To build a house on such property was not an easy matter in 1637. The land had first to be cleared and many logs prepared, for not only were they to be used for the frame of the house and barn, but also for a heavy stockade or palisade which must be erected to surround all the buildings. This was to serve as a protection from wild beasts for the settlers and their live stock, and also as a defense against the Indians, whose trail ran near the house. A great deal of arduous labor was involved, but for this it was possible to secure the services of the "werkbaas" (workboss) and certain slaves who were owned and maintained in New Amsterdam by the West India Company and let out for hire to the inhabitants. Indeed, there is little doubt that the werkbaas was so employed on Hendrick's land, for in a deposition of March 22, 1639, concerning buildings erected and work done in New Netherland through official aid during van Twiller's time, there is the statement, "Much work has been done at la Montagne's Bouwery." [1] Besides this it was afterward shown that the werkbaas knew all about Hendrick's original contract with Tobias Teunissen and Willem Bout, who undoubtedly helped in the cultivation of Hendrick's bouwery

[1] La Montagne owned this tract later.

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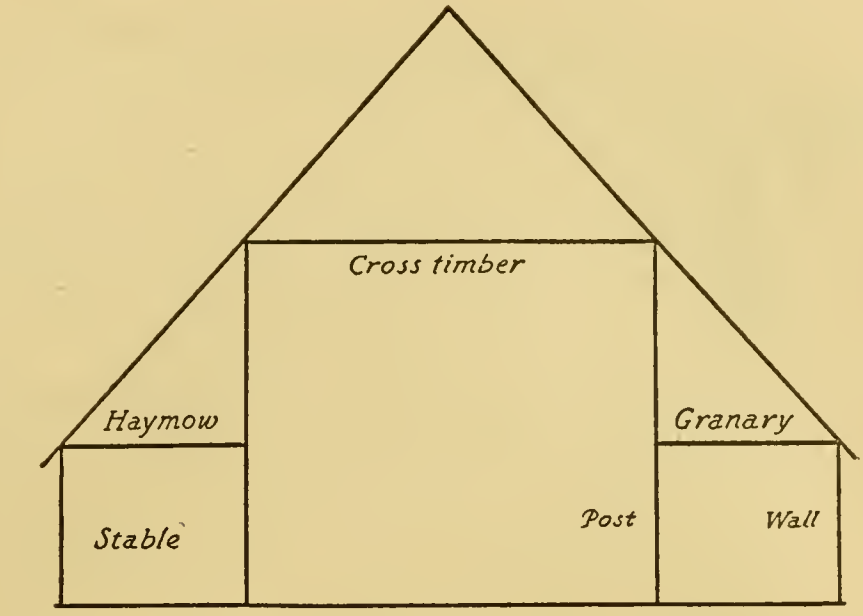
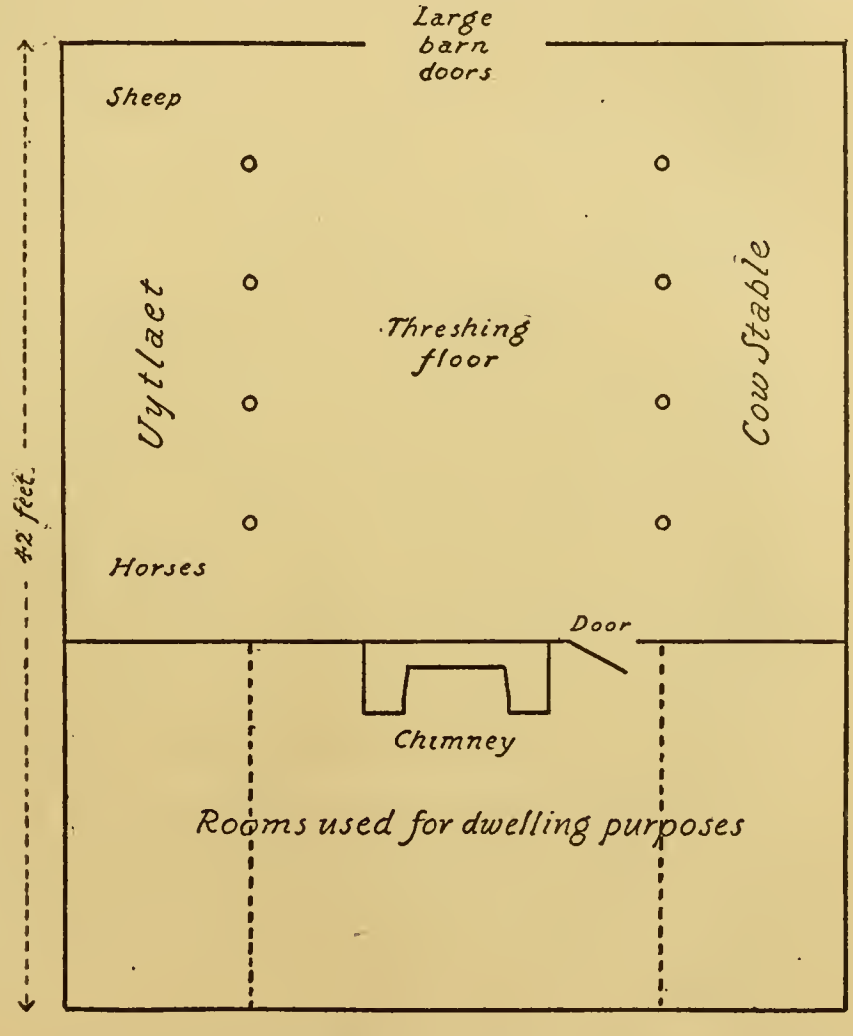
and in the building of his house; for Tobias was a good practical farmer and Willem, we know, was an excellent carpenter.

The house is said to have been "42 feet long, 18 feet wide with 2 doors." [1] This description (the original of which was destroyed in the fire that damaged the State Capitol at Albany in 1911) is taken from O'Callaghan's translation, which is not always quite accurate. The Dutch farmhouse of that period was a combination of dwelling-house in front and barn in the rear. Judging from O'Callaghan's translations of the specifications of other houses, there is very little doubt that the term which he translates as "doors" was in the original text "uytlaeten," literally outlets or extensions. This expression does not refer to doors but to long narrow compartments, usually extending the full length of the barn between the outer walls and the posts which supported the roof, as indicated in the plan below. The width, eighteen feet, refers to the open floor in the centre, which was used for threshing. The spaces on the sides, the "uytlaeten," were for stabling purposes, and the open lofts above them for fodder.

The house had a thatched roof made of reeds, for the construction of which nine hundred bundles were used; it had also a brick chimney, which it took "Dirck the mason" ten days to build. A brick chimney was an unusual luxury. The early chimneys

[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. 1, p. 59.





DRAWINGS OF HENDRICK'S FARMHOUSE AS IT MUST ORIGINALLY HAVE BEEN BUILT

New Netherland

were frequently "catted"; in other words, a square chimney was made of short logs crossed at the corners, all the interstices of which were filled in and covered with clay. Of course such a method of construction was the cause of many fires.

Hendrick's house may have been "half timbered"; that is, the frame built of heavy timbers and the wall spaces between them filled in with clay or stone. On the other hand, it is not unlikely that it was clapboarded. Many farmhouses were so built even in those early days. After the carpenters had put up the frame, the farmers themselves would often nail on the clapboards. Jasper Donckaerts, who travelled through this part of New Netherland in 1679, gives a graphic even if a cheerless account of the clapboarded houses, as follows: —

"The dwellings are so wretchedly constructed, that if you do not keep so close to the fire as almost to burn yourself you cannot keep warm, for the wind blows through them everywhere. Most of the English, and many others, have their houses made of nothing but clapboards, as they call them here, in this manner: they first make a wooden frame, the same as they do in Westphalia and at Altona, but not so strong; they then split the boards of clapwood, so that they are like cooper's pipe staves, except they are not bent. These are made very thin, with a large knife, so that the thickest end is about a pinck (little finger) thick, and the other is made sharp, like the

edge of a knife. They are about 5 or 6 feet long and are nailed on the outside of the frame, with the ends lapped over each other. They are not usually laid so close together, as to prevent you from sticking a finger between them in consequence either of their not being well joined or the boards being crooked. When it is cold and windy the best people plaster them with clay. Such are most all of the English houses in this country, except those they have which were built by people of other nations." [1] *New Netherland*

The house for curing tobacco on Hendrick's land was put up by an English carpenter, John Merris (Morris?), and it could not have been very well built, for it blew down four years later, to the great injury of the tobacco which it contained.[2] This goes to prove Donckaerts' statement about the workmanship of the English carpenters.

Hendrick had other duties besides those connected with his bouwery, for he was still the mate and trader of the Rensselaerswyck. When he had been only three months on shore, the yacht returned from her cruise up the river and he was summoned to sail with her for the English colonies in Virginia. Isaack, only twenty-one years old, was too young to have all the responsibility of the bouwery laid upon his shoulders

[1] Journal of Jasper Donckaerts and Peter Sluyter, 1679–80. Memoirs Long Island Historical Society, vol. I, p. 173.

[2] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 78; Council Minutes, vol. IV, p. 110.

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and so his brother-in-law, La Montagne,[1] was sent for and given command at Muscoota.

Had it not been for this unfortunate voyage, on which Hendrick contracted a fatal disease, he, not his younger brother Isaack, would probably have become the founder of the de Forest family in America.

The Rensselaerswyck set sail on June 13th and arrived on the twenty-ninth at Smith's Island, east of Cape Charles, Virginia. On that same day Hendrick was sent on shore "to further the work." While the yacht was still at Cape Charles a passing vessel spoke them and was told that "they hoped to follow soon and had sold most of their goods and sold them well, but that they must first call on the English at the north and also stop in New Netherland." [2] Poor Hendrick little knew that his "stop" in New Netherland was to be a final one.

The coast of Virginia was at that time exceedingly unhealthful during the months of June, July, and August. Captain de Vries wrote of it: "They attribute the mortality in this land . . . to the variableness of the climate; one hour it is so hot, at this season, that a man cannot endure the heat, the next hour the wind shifts to the northwest with such

[1] Jean Mousnier de la Montagne from the time of his arrival in New Netherland signed himself simply La Montagne, though he was often called Johannes La Montagne or Montanye and the name was frequently pronounced according to the latter spelling.

[2] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 349.

freshness that he has to put on an overcoat." [1] *New Netherland*
De Vries said that when he arrived there in 1635 he found thirty-six large English ships at Blank Point and fifteen of the thirty-six captains were already dead in consequence of their coming too early to the English Virginias. Another traveller in 1637 wrote: "It is certain that Virginia being lowest on the sea is most unhealthy, where they [die] by thousands sometimes, of the epidemical disease of the country . . . all those who come into the country must undergo this sickness without escape."

This "epidemical disease" Hendrick undoubtedly contracted, and although he and the rest of the ship's company reached New Amsterdam on July 16th, it was only ten days later, on July 26, 1637, that Captain Schellinger with pitiful brevity made the following entry in his log: "About two o'clock in the morning my mate heindrick de freest died." [2]

La Montagne made arrangements for the funeral, which took place the next day, undoubtedly in the wooden church which had already been built on the "Strand" of the East River. Good Domine Bogardus [3] officiated. It seems probable that the

[1] De Vries, Capt. David Pietersz. Voyages from Holland to America 1632–1644, from Narratives of New Netherland, edited by J. Franklin Jameson, p. 193.

[2] Van Rensselaer Bowier MSS., p. 382.

[3] He had matriculated at the Leyden University in 1627 and may therefore have been a fellow-student with La Montagne. In 1633 he had come to New Amsterdam with Director Wouter van Twiller.

New Netherland

Domine was an old friend of the family; it must therefore have been a comfort to have him with them at such a time. According to custom, for each pall-bearer a silver spoon was provided by La Montagne (at his own cost) as a memento of the deceased; unlimited beer was drunk and pipes were smoked; and then the scene closed over Hendrick de Forest.

Hendrick, like his father, had been eager to seek his fortune in the New World, and, like him, had there met nothing but disaster and death. Each left a widow in the old Dutch home who for months did not know of her bereavement.

It was fortunate that La Montagne was on hand to take charge of Hendrick's affairs. He was a man of considerable executive ability, quite equal to the responsibility of finishing Hendrick's house and caring for his property. He was in charge of the bouwery from July 3, 1637, to June 22, 1638.[1] Until the house was sufficiently finished to be habitable, he boarded with his nearest neighbor, Jacob van Curler. Under La Montagne's direction the farm was cultivated in a satisfactory manner; the first year's tobacco crop (two hundred pounds) sold for fl.135.[2] After his brother-in-law's death La Montagne disposed of Hendrick's personal belong-

[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. 1, p. 57. For this item and those which follow see La Montagne's Specification, July 23, 1638.

[2] The words florin and guilder were used interchangeably.

ings for fl.159, keeping for himself only "a pair of old shoes and a pair of slippers," valued at four florins.

As winter drew near, La Montagne laid in a stock of provisions — wheat, maize from Virginia, rye, a firkin of butter, dried peas, 11 gallons of vinegar, 1 gallon of oil, 9 gallons of train oil, pumpkins, 12 pounds of candles, half pound of pepper, 1 hogshead of meal, 1 schepel of groats, 53 pounds of pork, and 30 pounds of beef. From "Jan the fisherman" he bought not only fish (sometimes as many as one hundred and ten at a time) and salted eels, but also "shirts and other necessaries," ropes, lead, shot, and powder. Tobias shot a deer for them now and then, and, finding that for fresh meat they must depend largely on their own exertions, La Montagne got Kiliaen van Rensselaer to send him over a "long gun."

A yawl was one of the treasured possessions at Muscoota — a most necessary one, inasmuch as it furnished the easiest way of reaching New Amsterdam and was the only means by which the settlers could transport their crops. One day the yawl drifted away and great was the consternation of the family. They had a smaller boat built to replace it, but were more than ready to give fl.10 ($4) to the Indian who found and returned the "lost yawl." Another boat which they owned was a "weyschuyt" or meadow boat, which was used for bringing in the salt hay.

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The house was probably finished in January, and Rachel was installed therein with her little Marie and the three older children, her husband, her brother Isaack, and their indispensable aids, Tobias and Willem. The work being too heavy for Rachel, a servant, Ariaen, was employed for fl.12.50 ($5) a month. It would be pleasant could we have a glimpse of Rachel in her new home. The child of Jesse the Dyer may well have succeeded in making her home in the wilderness pretty and attractive.

The author of "French Blood in America,"[2] in a chapter on the life of the Huguenots in the New World says:—

> The Huguenot refugees . . . were gentle, trained in many arts, and possessed of the keen perceptions, the courtesy, and the easy adaptability of their race. . . .
>
> Tradition says that the first to utilize the remnants of worn-out garments by cutting them into strips and weaving them into carpets were the French. The rag carpet was in its day an advance agent of comfort and culture. . . . Among the earliest importations of the French settlers were the spinning wheels and looms of better quality than were previously known here. . . .
>
> Where the English and Dutch dyed linen yarn of heavy quality and wove it into ugly stripes and checks for bed and window curtains, the French used either white linen or that with but one color, dainty shades of light blue or dusky green or a subdued gold colour made by dyes of which they had brought the secret with them being preferred. . . .

[1] Fosdick, Lucian J. French Blood in America, pp. 406 ff.

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The cultivated taste and the dainty arts brought from France made the homes of the Huguenots much more attractive in appearance than those of the other colonists, even though the latter might have far more wealth.

While matters were thus progressing favorably for our settlers in the New World, we must not forget Gertrude Bornstra, the bride whom Hendrick had left in Amsterdam when he sailed and who was still in Holland when the news of his death reached her. We know that she was visiting in Leyden as late as August, 1637, and we have no record of her crossing the sea during the time of her widowhood.

Before long, however, a new actor appeared upon the scene — a young man named Andries Hudde, who had been in New Amsterdam since 1629 and who had occupied a prominent position as a member of Director van Twiller's council.[1] He owned several valuable pieces of real estate and was a man of considerable importance. Andries wooed young Gertrude even before her year of widowhood was over, though where the wooing took place we do not know. Hudde may have gone to Amsterdam for the purpose, as Gertrude was still living there. At all events, in June, 1638, Hudde was evidently already betrothed to Gertrude; for as her representative he was back again in New Amsterdam claiming the estate of her former husband, Hendrick. Hudde

[1] O'Callaghan, E. B. Register of New Netherland, p. 12.

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applied to Director-General Kieft for a ground brief or patent for the bouwery, the land grant having heretofore, as we know, been merely a verbal one. This must have been promised, for La Montagne on June 22nd paid off the men who had been employed at the bouwery, also Ariaen, the servant, and then left himself. Hudde, anxious to return to his Gertrude, did not even wait for his official ground brief before he made a contract on July 10th with one Hans Hansen to cultivate tobacco on the bouwery on shares. He promised Hansen to send him six or eight farm laborers with suitable tools "by the first opportunity of any vessel leaving a port of Holland." [1]

On July 20, 1638, Director Kieft signed the ground brief [1] which gave to Andries Hudde the two hundred acres which had belonged to Hendrick de Forest. This was, so far as is now known, the first legal conveyance of any land on Manhattan — in fact, it was only about July 1st of that year that the authorities had decided to give such titles. The document makes no mention of Gertrude, the widow, but Dutch betrothals were almost as binding as marriages, and Hudde must have received the patent as her future husband, for it says that he could dispose of the property "in like manner as he might do with his own lands." The only stipulation in this patent is that Hudde and his successors

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. XIV, p. 11.

"shall acknowledge their High Mightinesses, the managers [1] aforesaid, as their Sovereign Lords and Patroons, and shall render at the end of each ten years after the actual settlement and cultivation of the land, the just tenth part of the products with which God may bless the soil, and from this time forth annually for the house and lot, deliver a pair of capons to the Director for the Holidays." [2] *New Netherland*

Before Hudde sailed, Domine Bogardus was given a power of attorney for Gertrude.[3] It was after that, on July 23rd, that La Montagne presented an account or "Specification" for all his receipts and expenditures at the bouwery. Hudde did not settle this account before he left; perhaps he had already sailed before it was presented, though it was only three days since he had received his ground brief. It was Domine Bogardus who by virtue of his power of attorney "examined and accepted" La Montagne's account, and then the original was "sent to the Fatherland," presumably to Gertrude. La Montagne's claim was for 680 guilders. It is a pity that Hudde did not settle the account before leaving, as we shall see presently, but he was evidently in need of money himself at that time, for just before sailing he put a mortgage on a Long Island farm which belonged to him.

[1] Directors of the West India Company.
[2] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. XIV, p. 12.
[3] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. IV, p. 19.

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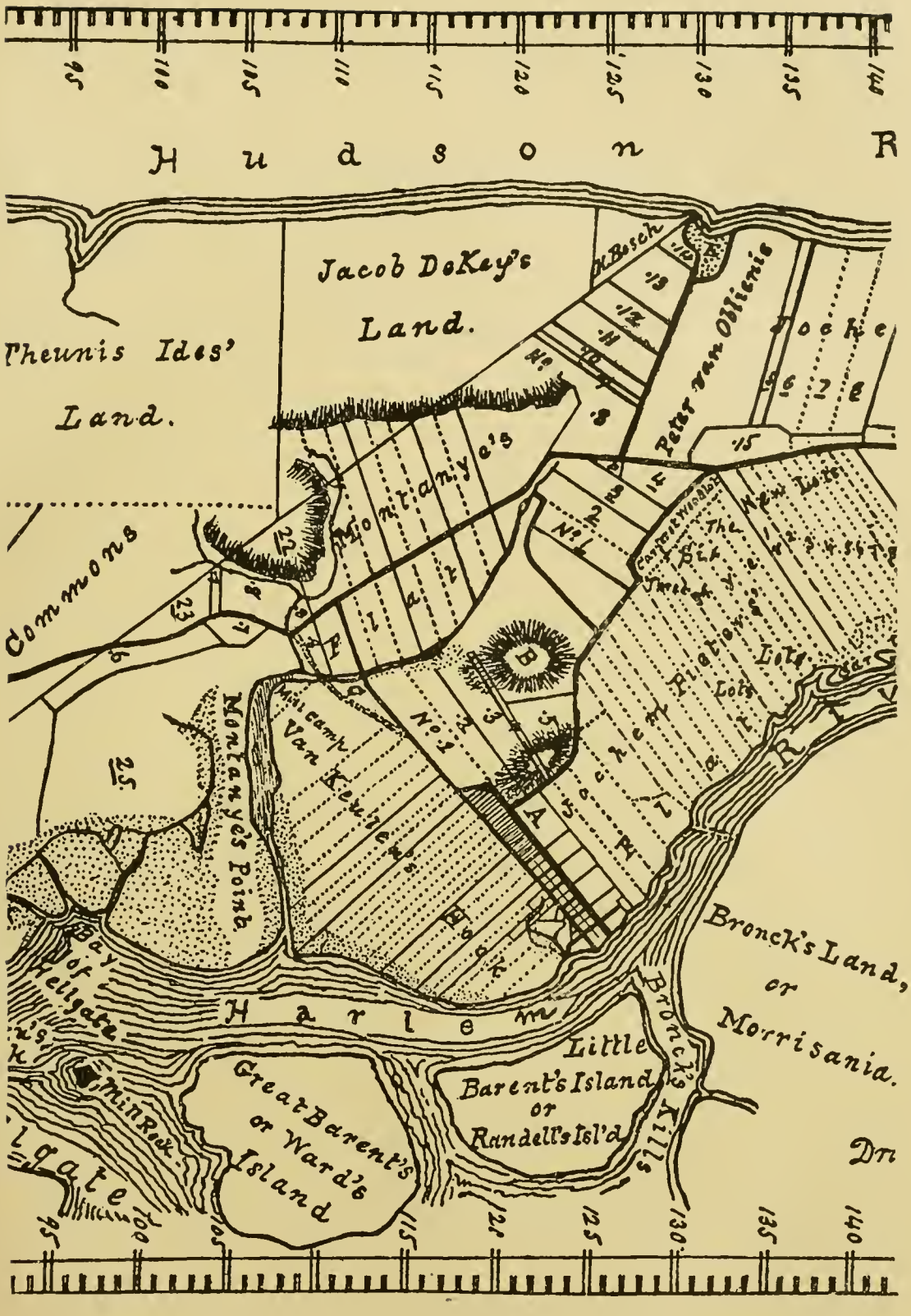
La Montagne with the money due him for his expenditure on the bouwery still unpaid, did nothing until September 16th. Then he took proceedings against the Domine, saying: "Whereas the Deft. has a power of attorney from Geertruyt Bornstra, widow of the late Hendrick de Foreest, the Pltff's brother-in-law, to realize the property and collect the debts of the said Foreest, the Pltff. demands that the Deft. shall take possession of the house together with the cattle and property of the plantation, on condition that the Pltff. be paid by the Deft. whatever balance is due him by de Foreest, according to the account thereof in existence." [1]

Two weeks later the Court ordered that "the effects belonging to Hendrick de Foreest, deceased, or his heirs" should be "sold publicly in Fort Amsterdam to the highest bidder for the benefit of the widow" [2] and that from the proceeds La Montagne should be repaid his 680 guilders. The auction was held on October 7th and La Montagne bought in the property for 1,800 guilders. This left him 1,120 guilders in debt to the estate.

The purchase included the land and the dwelling-house with its surrounding palisades, also "two milch cows; 1 heifer 2 years old; 1 bull of 1 year; half a bull calf of this year; 2 old goats; half of a little male kid of this year; ½ a kid of this year; 6 hens

[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. IV, p. 19.
[2] Ibid., vol. IV, p. 20.



MAP OF NEW HARLEM SHOWING "MONTANYE'S FLAT," CALLED BY HIM "VREDENDAL"

The long, narrow strip extending from Montanye's Flat to the Harlem River, here marked No. 1, represents Isaack's bouwery. The measures at top and bottom indicate present numbered streets.

and 2 cocks, with about 20 chickens; 4 guns, good and bad; 1 kettle; 1 churn; 4 axes, good and bad; 6 pickaxes; 2 siths; 2 scythes; 2 iron forks; one fourth of 600 tobacco plants and 1 tobacco house; one half of the grain of one morgen of land; one weyschuyt." [1] A good idea of the farm equipment of the early settlers may be gained from this list. *New Netherland*

The new owner promptly took possession and named the place "Vredendal" (quiet or peaceful dale), a name by which it was long called although its history for many subsequent years was anything but peaceful. The wonderful spring was then given a name, "Montanye's fonteyn," [2] by which it was known for a long time.

Tobias and Willem saw in this change of masters a possible opportunity for release from their "bounden service," and so they brought the matter before the court, claiming that their contract had been made with Gerard de Forest and not with his nephew. La Montagne thereupon showed that he had "power and authority" [3] from Gerard to act as his agent, and Tobias and Willem had to agree to serve out their "3 successive years."

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[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. 1, p. 59.

A "sith" was a sickle, usually called a Hainaut or Flemish scythe. A "weyschuyt" was a meadow boat, such as was used for bringing in the salt hay.

[2] Riker, James. History of Harlem, Revised Edition, pp. 134, 182.

[3] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. IV, p. 22.

New Netherland

Now that Dr. La Montagne (for we must not forget that he was a physician) has settled down contentedly in his Quiet Dale, we must learn a little more about his personal affairs. Soon after his arrival he had become a prominent figure in New Amsterdam. As early as 1637 we find his name on a list of physicians and surgeons there. Before this date the doctors available in the community had been mainly the "ships' surgeons who practiced on shore while their vessels lay in port." [1]

As yet La Montagne had taken no active part in public affairs, but the time was not far off when he was to occupy a prominent position. Director van Twiller's methods of government were not satisfactory to the West India Company and he was recalled to Holland. The new Director-General, Willem Kieft, arrived at New Amsterdam in March, 1638. Being allowed to select his own councillors,

[1] The following extract from the Dutch records is amusing. "On the petition of the Chirurgeons of New Amsterdam, that none but they alone be allowed to shave; the Director and Council understand that Shaving doth not appertain exclusively to Chirurgery, but is an appendix thereunto; that no man can be prevented operating on himself, nor to do another this friendly act, provided it be through courtesy and not for gain, which is hereby forbidden."

It was then further "Ordered, that Ship-Barbers shall not be allowed to dress any wounds, nor administer any potions on shore, without the previous knowledge and special consent of the Petitioners, or at least of Doctor La Montagne." (N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. xiv, pp. 155–56.)

Kieft decided to choose only one, and desiring a "proper experienced person," selected Johannes La Montagne. La Montagne had of course one vote at council meetings and Kieft had one also; but, as Director-General, Kieft had the casting vote as well, which always left La Montagne in the minority if there was a difference of opinion between them. Councillor La Montagne's salary was thirty-five florins a month, but in addition to this he had many privileges. For instance, he had placed at his disposal the cattle on Bouwery No. 1, which belonged to Wouter van Twiller, the former Director. So he probably had no difficulty in living comfortably on his new bouwery. *New Netherland*

Meanwhile what were the former owners, Hudde and Gertrude, doing? We hear nothing of them until January, 1639, when preparations were evidently being made for their marriage; at least, their banns were being published in Amsterdam — and what could more clearly indicate a marriage than the publication of banns! *Amsterdam*

When the wedding was really near at hand, Jan de Forest, Hendrick's elder brother, thought it time to bestir himself if he and his brother Isaack were to secure any inheritance from Hendrick's estate. Isaack, being as yet under twenty-five years of age, was still under Dutch law a minor, and so Jan asked that a certain Jacob Bonasse, a City Packer of Amsterdam, should, with the acquiescence of Gertrude

Amsterdam Bornstra, be appointed to represent the brothers and be allowed to sell Hendrick's property, wherever situated, so that Jan and Isaack might each receive their proper portion.[1] Jan asked that Isaack's share be invested in the "Orphan's Room" in Amsterdam. We do not know what the sequel to this action was, but it will be shown later that both brothers received their portions, though by another hand.

New Netherland It was probably on July 7, 1639, that Hudde and his wife landed in New Amsterdam. They brought with them goods and supplies for use in the cultivation of their bouwery, for they took it for granted that it was still theirs. Stormy scenes probably ensued when the travellers found themselves without a home. Hudde, who had needed money to pay for his purchases in Amsterdam, had borrowed two hundred guilders from a fellow-passenger, promising payment on arrival. He was therefore in great stress, and finding that his bouwery was really no longer his, he was obliged to accept two hundred guilders from La Montagne as part payment of the balance which the latter still owed to Hendrick's estate. To add insult to injury, Hudde is made to say in the receipt that he "thanks La Montagne for the payment." [2]

It was not, however, until a year later that "Monsieur Johannes la Montaengne, and S^r^.

[1] Jan de Forest's Petition. Appendix, p. 355.
[2] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. 1, p. 139.

Andries Hudde . . . conjointly acknowledged that they amicably agreed and contracted on the 12th of July A° 1640 respecting the purchase of the farm and goods and chattels lying on the Island of Manhates, named *Vredendael*, left by the late Hendric de Foreest." [1] The value of one-sixth part of the "goods and chattels," according to the inventory made out by Gertrude, was 164 guilders ($65.60); this sum was given to La Montagne that he might satisfy the claims of Hendrick's brothers, and the matter was then closed. [2] Needless to say, immediately after this, on August 28, 1640, La Montagne secured a hard and fast deed to the property. *New Netherland*

With regard to Hudde and Gertrude, little need be added. Their first son was born in 1642 and, according to a curious custom of those times, was named Hendrick after Gertrude's first husband. The child did not live long, and so when two years later another son arrived, he also was named Hendrick, while Isaack de Forest's wife, Sarah du Trieux, appeared as one of the witnesses at his baptism.[3] In 1644 Hudde was given the position of chief commissary at Fort Nassau on the South River. It was probably there that his wife Gertrude died some years later. Hudde himself died in 1663.

[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. 1, p. 216.
[2] Ibid., vol. 1, p. 217.
[3] Baptisms Dutch Church in New York, 1639–1730, pp. 14, 16.

New Netherland

Although Hudde had in 1640 renounced all claims to Vredendal, La Montagne was not much longer to enjoy it. Misfortunes were now hard upon him. A minor trouble, but one that gave him annoyance, was that Dirck Corssen Stam, the supercargo of the Rensselaerswyck, who was probably jealous of La Montagne's prominence, spread evil reports in Holland regarding him, saying that "Johannes La Montagne daily filled his pockets with ducatoons and jacobuses," and legal steps were necessary to oblige Stam to retract these statements.[1]

But something much more serious was now causing great anxiety to all. The Indians became dangerously aggressive in the neighborhood, committing many depredations and several murders. Director-General Kieft finally determined to destroy all who were within his reach. La Montagne urged pacific measures. "We ought," said he, "first to consider well whether we shall be able to give protection to those who are living at a distance." Unfortunately his counsel was unheeded, and on the night of February 25, 1643,[2] a large number of the Indians in the vicinity were slaughtered. As a natural result those who were left retaliated with fires and massacres. La Montagne did not suffer from this early attack, but the threatening attitude of the Indians

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 78; Council Minutes, vol. IV, p. 110.

[2] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 84.

continued to give all a feeling of great disquietude. *New Netherland*

Another difficulty brought him added care at this time. Tobias and Willem, having finished their three years of service, were paid off and became "freemen" with bouweries of their own. Their former master was thus left in a very much handicapped condition, as he now had twenty-six acres planted in rye, barley, and peas; there were other crops as well, also his tobacco plantation. To relieve himself of responsibility he gave a three-year lease of the bouwery on June 14, 1643, to Bout Fransen, who agreed to cultivate it on shares. But, in only three months, the owner was obliged to release Fransen from his contract,[1] for the neighboring Indians, having harvested their maize, returned to their bloody work. No one was spared. Those who could do so fled to the town and hardly a settler remained on Manhattan Island except in New Amsterdam itself. Riker in his "History of Harlem" says, "Montagne 'was driven off his land,' involving the loss of all he could not carry away."

A despairing letter begging for assistance was written by the authorities in New Amsterdam on November 3, 1643, to the States General at The Hague. "We, wretched people," said they, "must skulk, with wives and children that still survive, in

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 22; Register of Provincial Secretary, pp. 59, 60.

New Netherland

poverty together, in and around the fort at the Manahatas where we are not safe even for an hour whilst the Indians daily threaten to overwhelm us. Very little can be planted this autumn and much less in the spring; so that it will come to pass that all of us who will yet save our lives must of necessity perish next year of hunger and sorrow unless our God have pity on us." [1] But of course immediate help from Holland was impossible.

A war against the Indians was now inevitable. La Montagne, who was recognized as a man of resource and judgment, was given the chief military command. He continued to hold this position and headed many expeditions against the Indians during the following winter and spring. In the summer of 1645 the Indians were wearied with the two years' war, and what was supposed to be a "solid and durable peace" was concluded.

During the time of the Indian warfare, a still worse trial than the loss of his land had come to La Montagne. It was probably in the early part of 1643 and at Vredendal that he had had the sorrow of losing his wife, Rachel de Forest.[2] She had ever remained faithful at his side and had more than once gone into the wilderness with him. She was not over

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. 1, p. 139.

[2] It is not impossible that she was one of those killed by the Indians, though it seems improbable that the wife of Councillor La Montagne should have so suffered without its being mentioned in the official records.

"MONTANYE'S FONTEYN," AS STILL TO BE SEEN FLOWING INTO HARLEM MERE, CENTRAL PARK

thirty-three or thirty-four when she died, and she had borne him six children, little William, her youngest child, having been born in 1641. *New Netherland*

After his wife was taken from him, La Montagne did not feel the same interest in Vredendal, and for that and other reasons not far to seek decided to make his home in New Amsterdam, where he had so many duties. He deemed it wise, however, to secure a new ground brief for his bouwery. This was the more advisable because his friend Kieft was about to return to Holland. On May 9, 1647, Kieft, two days before his departure, gave the required document.[1] Included in the deed was a point of land called "Rechawanes," "The Great Sands," which extended between two kills into the East River. This point, usually called "Montanye's Point," had not been part of the territory granted to Hendrick, but was allotted to La Montagne afterward so that he might have some salt meadow and an outlet on the river. *New Amsterdam*

A little later in the same year, that is, four years after Rachel's death, he turned from thoughts of troublous conflicts to more personal and peaceful considerations, for he had decided to marry again. The lady of his choice was Angenietie, widow of Arent Corssen.[2] Now Arent had been lost at sea

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 75; Land Papers, vol. GG, p. 216.

[2] The brother of Dirck Corssen Stam, supercargo of the Rensselaerswyck.

New Amsterdam

and there was difficulty in proving his death, but the Council finally decided that "if Mr. La Montagne, and she Angenietie, have no scruples regarding it, they are at liberty to Marry." So in September of that year the wedding took place.

The next few years were peaceable enough, but on September 14, 1655, there suddenly appeared before Manhattan Island sixty-four canoes filled with armed savages and the bloody scenes of 1643 were re-enacted. Many in New Amsterdam were now in favor of another war of extermination, but La Montagne, always moderate and conservative, opposed the idea because of the weakness of the colony. "If," said he, "we have no power to prosecute a war, then it becomes necessary that we remain quiet till we shall obtain it, and meanwhile not to place too much confidence in the Indians." [1] Fortunately his counsel prevailed.

When Peter Stuyvesant, the new Director-General, landed in May, 1647, he immediately retained La Montagne as a member of his council, and Councillor La Montagne thus continued to be one of the most important men in New Amsterdam. But Indian and other troubles still continued, and Johannes La Montagne in 1656,[2] probably tired of

[1] Riker, James. History of Harlem Revised Edition, p. 163.

[2] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 173.

strife and contention and hoping to escape further trials, accepted the position of Vice-Director at Fort Orange, with an annual salary of nine hundred guilders. Our old friend Willem Fredericks Bout was then at Rensselaerswyck, but poor Tobias Teunissen had fallen a victim to the ferocity of the Indians in 1655. *New Amsterdam*

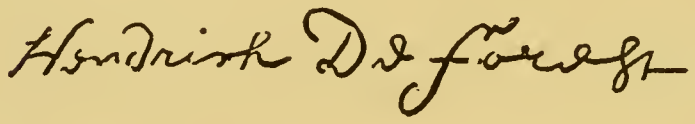
Even at Fort Orange ill fortune pursued La Montagne. His daughter Rachel (who had married Surgeon Gysbert Van Imbroech of Esopus) was in 1663 taken captive with her little Lysbet by the Esopus Indians.[1] In about a month they were released, but the period of their absence was one of great anxiety. Meanwhile Vice-Director La Montagne had found the position at Fort Orange not so satisfactory and lucrative as he had hoped and in 1662 he wrote a most pathetic letter to Stuyvesant and the council at New Amsterdam. In it he said: "I always kept my household in victuals and clothes as temperately as a common burgher here; but the excessive dearth of all things has driven me insensibly into such need and poverty, as that never in the 68 years that I have lived, so great distress have felt, finding myself destitute of all means to provide for my daily bread, and provisions for the winter . . . I, spending in bread, small beer and wood f.800, have of necessity light money of the balance left to speak of." He added that his hope *Fort Orange*

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. XIII, pp. 246, 271, 283.

Fort Orange rested "in those who until now have always helped me." [1]

Only two years later the English were in possession of New Netherland, and La Montagne with many another good man prudently took the oath of allegiance. He was now, however, wearied by the many uncertainties of his life and broken in spirit, and although we have no documentary proof, it is possible that he returned to Holland in 1665 with Stuyvesant. As his son Johannes dropped the "Jr." from his name in May, 1670, it is to be presumed that the father died at about that date. He must then have been seventy-six years of age.

[1] Riker, James. History of Harlem, Revised Edition, p. 794.



IV

ISAACK DE FOREST

The Founder of the Family in America

New Netherland

WE already know that on March 4, 1637, Isaack, then a youth of twenty-one, arrived at New Amsterdam. He undoubtedly aided his brother Hendrick in selecting a site for his plantation and in building his house on the broad plain of Muscoota.

Not long after his arrival, Isaack too received a grant for a "bouwery." [1] This was a narrow strip of land nearly a mile in length, which had been found to lie unassigned between the tracts already granted to Jochem Pietersen Kuyter and Coenraet Van Keulen, and contained about one hundred acres. The strip began on Harlem Creek, opposite Hendrick's land, and extended in an easterly direction to the shore of the "Hellegat" (Harlem River), opposite Bronck's Kill (about First Avenue and 126th Street).

Formal titles were not at this time given for land — at any rate, no such records have been preserved — and in making a grant the Dutch authorities only stipulated that the land should be cultivated and improved within the two following years and

[1] N. Y. Colonial MSS., vol. GG, p. 219.

New Netherland

that after ten years of cultivation the grantees should annually pay to the officials the tenth part of their crops.

It is probable that Isaack raised tobacco on his farm even while living at Vredendal with his sister, but he lived with her only until he married. He found his wife in the person of young Sara du Trieux!

The bride's father was Philippe du Trieux (later called de Truy or Truax), who was entered in the church record at Amsterdam as a worsted-dyer from Robez (Roubaix), not very far from Avesnes. Philippe had been married twice and he and his first wife, Jacquemine (or Jacqueline) Noiret, had joined the Walloon church at Leyden in 1617. It is likely that he and Jesse de Forest, being fellow-dyers in the same city, were friends even at that early day. Apparently Philippe and his wife moved to Amsterdam, for several of their children were baptized there, the last one in 1620. It was evidently there, too, that Jacquemine died; for in 1621 in Amsterdam, Philippe du Trieux was betrothed to Susanna du Chesne. There is not much doubt that Philippe and Susanna were among the colonists who came to New Amsterdam on board the New Netherland in 1623. He was long known there as the "Court Messenger" or Marshal, as we should call him now. In 1638 (or possibly earlier, as the official records prior to that date are missing) he owned a

detached hillock on the shore of the East River overlooking "Smit's Vly" (valley), which is still called "The Swamp." At the time of his daughter's marriage he was, however, living in a house which he had built on "Bever Graft" (Beaver Street). *New Netherland*

In 1637, when the de Forests arrived in New Amsterdam, Philippe du Trieux was quite an old inhabitant, and we may be sure that he had a warm welcome ready for Jesse de Forest's children. Indeed, it is on record that almost as soon as they established themselves in the Muscoota bouwery Philippe furnished the family with pumpkins! Now pumpkins may not be a very romantic means of communication between two young people, but they must have been extremely acceptable none the less and they certainly indicate intercourse between the two families; it is not surprising, therefore, that Isaack de Forest and Sara du Trieux should have become interested in one another.

Sara is mentioned in the church record as "of New Netherland"; accordingly, she must have been born in New Amsterdam and was undoubtedly one of the first children born there. The first colonists having arrived in 1624, she could not have been over seventeen years of age when in the records of the Church in the Fort was entered the marriage, on June 9, 1641, of "Isaacq de Foreest, young man of Leyden, and Sara du Treux, young girl of New Netherland."

New Netherland

Isaack, being now a married man, wished to have a home of his own, and about a month after his marriage made a contract with the two English carpenters, Jan Habbesen (Hobson?) and Jan Merris (Morris?) to erect buildings for him on his own bouwery. The dwelling-house was to be built on the same general lines as that of his brother but with more conveniences. Length of building, 30 feet; width, 18 feet; "with 2 4-light windows and 2 3-light windows, 4 beams with brackets and 2 free beams." The whole house was to be "tight all round . . . in such manner as to be secure against water and snow." Inside, it had a partition, undoubtedly between the dwelling-house and the barn, also three doors and a pantry. In the part used as a barn there was a row of stalls. The kitchen was in a separate building, 20 by 16 feet, covered with clapboards and furnished with an "English chimney." This was probably built of cobblestones, which New England farmers so often used for their chimneys. The tobacco house, 60 feet long, contained "inside work." All these buildings, continues the record, the two English carpenters are to finish "as soon as they possibly can," and for the work are to receive 300 Carolus guilders ($120).[1]

To meet this payment the money received by Isaack from his brother Hendrick's estate was undoubtedly very useful, even though there was very

[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. 1, p. 250.

New Netherland

little of it. Only 164 guilders had been awarded to Isaack and his brother Jan in settlement of their claims, and we cannot tell exactly what portion Isaack received. All the information we have concerning his belongings at this time is that he owned one half of a bull calf and one half of two young kids — not a very large herd of cattle with which to start the stocking of a farm.

The year following the marriage there was great rejoicing in the lonely farmhouse, for a son and heir came to bless the young couple. He was baptized by Domine Bogardus in New Amsterdam on November 9, 1642, and was named "Jessen" for his grandfather, even Jesse's name having yielded to Dutch influence. Among the witnesses on this important occasion were Jochem Pietersen Kuyter, Isaack's nearest neighbor and a very eminent man in the colony; Philippe du Trieux, the baby's grandfather; and his aunt, Rachel de Forest, respectfully called "Madame de La Montagne," on account of her husband's prominent position.

The rejoicing, however, was soon turned to sorrow, for the little boy lived only a short time, and his Aunt Rachel also died soon afterward, though we do not know the exact date.

Then a new anxiety visited the young couple. They could hardly have been established in their home more than a year before Kieft made his ill-judged attack upon the Indians, who, as we have

New Netherland

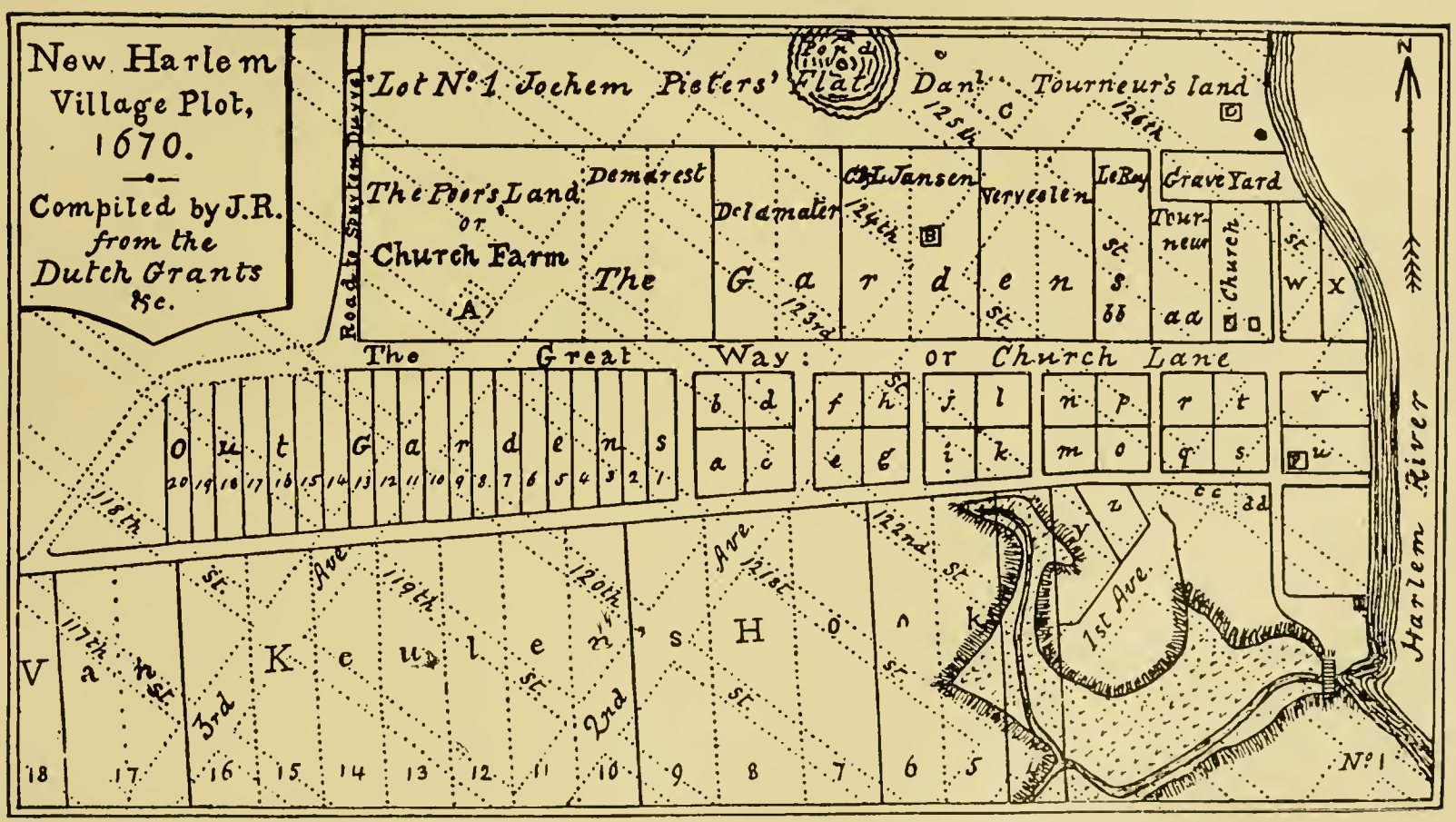
heard, retaliated. Neither Isaack nor La Montagne suffered from this early attack, but during the temporary peace which ensued, the younger man prudently decided to lease his bouwery for three years to John Denton, who was to cultivate tobacco for their joint account. The contract was signed on July 6, 1643,[1] and the agreement was to take effect on the first of the following October.[2] Long before that time, however, Denton had cancelled his lease, for the savages had again fallen upon the settlers with fire and brutal murders. Apparently the young couple had moved into the town as soon as the Denton lease was signed and so had escaped with their lives.

When Isaack left his bouwery on "the Kill that runs around the Island," he could have had no idea how historically interesting the land would become later. A short history of Isaack's bouwery, as well as of Hendrick's, may well be given in this place, although the record covers a period subsequent to that with which we are now dealing.

We know that Isaack's tenant, Denton, refused or was unable to carry out the provisions of his lease and that the land was very likely laid waste by the Indians in the fall of 1643. It was at about the same time that La Montagne was driven from his beloved Vredendal, which, as the reader will remember,

[1] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. III, p. 137.

[2] It was on June 14, 1643, that La Montagne had leased Vredendal to Fransen.



MAP OF NIEUW HAERLEM VILLAGE PLOTS, 1670

From Riker's "History of Harlem," p. 260

had been informally "granted" to Hendrick de Forest in 1637, "patented" by regular land brief to Andries Hudde in July, 1638, and sold at auction to La Montagne in October of the same year. Isaack's grant had probably been given a year or two later than that of his brother. *New Netherland*

The fact that both properties — those of La Montagne and de Forest — had been in all likelihood abandoned during the time of the Indian onslaught supplied a good reason for the new patents or land briefs that were secured later for both tracts. La Montagne's new patent was, as we have heard, given by Kieft on May 9, 1647,[1] two days before his departure for Holland, while Isaack de Forest's was given by the new Director-General, Stuyvesant, only six days afterward.[1]

In 1650, when a permanent peace was supposed to exist between the Indians and the whites, Isaack succeeded in selling his house and part of his bouwery to one of the best-known burghers of New Amsterdam, Willem Beeckman.[2] The latter, who dealt largely in real estate, resold it to Cornelis Claesen Swits only three years later. Swits with his family had occupied it but two years when in September, 1655, a second Indian outbreak took place. Swits was the first of the colonists on Manhattan Island who suffered at that time. He was

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 375.
[2] N.Y. Colonial MSS., vol. III, p. 46.

New Netherland

brutally murdered in his home (the house which Isaack had built), the house was probably burned, the crops were destroyed, the cattle killed or driven off, and Swits's wife and children carried into captivity. Many shared the same fate at this time, among others, Tobias Teunissen, the wool-washer who came with the de Forests from Leyden and who now had a bouwery of his own. Both families were subsequently released, but were left in a condition of abject poverty and were obliged before long to relinquish all claim to their lands.

After this calamity the Director and Council passed an ordinance forbidding settlers from living in solitary or exposed places. They also ordered that a village be laid out in which all the settlers could dwell together in comparative security. Isaack's land, already cleared and accessible from the waters of the Hellegat, was chosen for this purpose, and on it in 1658 was located the village of Nieuw Haerlem,[1] with Isaack's lane or wagon-track for its first street. Probably neither Isaack nor La Montagne ever regretted leaving the Muscoota region, but La Montagne's son, Jan La Montagne, Jr., was one of the first to take up land in the new village and was for many years one of its leading citizens.

New Amsterdam

When Isaack and Sara moved into New Amsterdam in the summer or early autumn of 1643, they

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 191.

found all the inhabitants in great terror of the Indians and everyone desirous of securing a site in the immediate vicinity of the fort. So urgent was the demand for lots that the authorities decided to grant for this purpose part of the "Marcktveldt," the market-place or esplanade which adjoined the fort. A narrow street or lane, only 22 feet wide, was therefore laid out in front of the Company's five stone houses. It was called "Winckel Straet," and on it five dwellings were built, with small gardens opening in the rear on the Marcktveldt. The centre house was the home of Domine Bogardus and adjoining it on the north was that occupied by Isaack and Sara. For this lot, 33 feet wide by 82½ feet deep, a patent was given by Director Kieft on August 22, 1646,[1] but the de Forests had very likely occupied the house several years before receiving their patent, as in those days was often the case. Here they lived for six years or more and here at least four of their children were born. *New Amsterdam*

Another piece of property had been conveyed to Isaack even before the lot on Winckel Straet. On September 5, 1645, he was "given and granted" a certain piece of land of an irregular shape which faced on the Marcktveldt.[2] Connected with this by a passageway only four feet wide was a large plot of land for a garden — indeed, it was about 170 by

[1] Valentine's Manual, 1857, p. 502.
[2] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 370.

New Amsterdam

85 feet, nearly half an acre. Just think of a garden of that size in the most crowded part of New Amsterdam! To be sure, it was in the middle of a block but it was easily reached by a lane from the market-place, the "Marcktveldt Steeg," and also from the lot on Brouwer Straet where Isaack lived after he left Winckel Straet.

This move took place before long, for Isaack, seeing his family increase and realizing that it would soon outgrow the limits of the little house, sought for a more satisfactory home. In the latter part of 1653 he purchased through the heirs of a certain Surgeon Van der Bogaerdt [1] the house which the latter had built and occupied on a street which was later named Brouwer Straet [2] but was then called simply "the road"; that is, the road from the fort to the valley beyond. It formed a connecting street between the Marcktveldt and the "Heere Graft," which is now known as Broad Street but then had an open ditch or "graft" through the middle of it. In this house Isaack and his family were living in 1653, and there he dwelt for the rest of his days, for Isaack's home was now permanently established in New Amsterdam.

It may not be amiss here to give some idea of the conditions that then prevailed in the town. Several

[1] For deeds of this property see Appendix, p. 358.

[2] Brewer's Street — undoubtedly so named because on it faced the great brewery of the West India Company.

MAP SHOWING ISAACK'S LOT ON BROUWER STRAET

A dark line surrounds Isaack's entire plot

Adapted from maps in "New Amsterdam and Its People," by J. H. Innes

writers of the day have left us descriptions of New Amsterdam at about this period. Peter Kalm wrote: "Most of the houses are built in the old way, with the gable end towards the street; the gable end of brick & all the other walls of planks . . . . The street doors are generally in the middle of the houses and on both sides are seats, on which, during fair weather, the people spend almost the whole day." *New Amsterdam*

Madam Knight, who travelled so extensively in New England, in writing of New Amsterdam tells us: "The Buildings are Brick Generally, very stately & high. The Bricks in some of the Houses are of divers Coullers and laid in Checkers, being glazed, look very agreeable. The inside of them is neat to admiration." [1]

Still another writer says that the land being high, the town presented a "pleasing aspect to the Spectator"; that the gable ends of the high roofs were "notched like steps"; that "the front doors were equally divided as in Holland with an upper & a lower half"; and that there were "divers sorts of singing birds whose chirping notes salute the ear of Travellers with an harmonious discord and in every pond and brook green silken Frogs who warbling forth their untun-d tunes strive to make a part of this musick."

Director Kieft had told Father Isaac Jogues, the

[1] Knight, Madam. Brief Description of New York. London, 1670.

New Amsterdam

French Jesuit, who stayed in the town in 1643, that there were at that time "four or five hundred men of different sects and nations" living in and about New Amsterdam and that eighteen different languages were spoken.[1] So even at that early date the place was cosmopolitan in character.

Of course there was a church in New Amsterdam even before the de Forests went there to live, and Domine Bogardus was then in charge of it. A church for the "Reformed Religion," a wooden building of the simplest kind, with an equally simple house and stable for the domine, had been erected in 1633 on the shore of the East River (then called the Strand and, later, Pearl Street). Here the Dutch domine preached in his mother tongue, although in the very earliest times a domine had preached sometimes in French also for the benefit of the Walloons. In 1643 a new church was in process of erection, 72 feet long and 55 feet wide, its walls being "laid up in quarry stone." Here in the Church of St. Nicholas, the "Church in the Fort," as it was called, the Dutch for fifty years held their services.

There were probably about 150 members of this church when Isaack moved into the town. La Montagne was at one time an elder and quite likely Isaack too held office, but the early records are unfortunately very incomplete. Some of the most

[1] Narratives of New Netherland, edited by J. Franklin Jameson, p. 259.

SILVER COMMUNION BEAKER USED IN THE CHURCH
IN THE FORT

Made in Haerlem (Holland) in 1638

treasured possessions of the Church in the Fort were its pieces of communion silver, especially a beautiful beaker that came from Holland and bears the 1638 mark of a Harlem maker. It is therefore quite safe to assume that this beaker was used at the church when Isaack and Sara attended services there. *New Amsterdam*

Apparently progress in secular affairs was slow. The first public tavern was built by Director Kieft in 1643; this was used for the accommodation of strangers as well as for many municipal purposes, and in 1653 it became the first "Stadt Huys" or city hall. There were still no public schools in the town, and while a ferry ran between New Amsterdam and Long Island (a flat-bottomed boat, summoned by the blowing of a horn), not even a wagon road led to the bouweries on the northern part of the island. The streets were not lighted and it was many years before an ordinance was passed that during the "*dark time of the moon* . . . every seventh house do hang out a *pole* with a lantern and candle." It was also many years before the order was given that "no swine whatsoever be suffered to goe or range in any of the streets."

As to labor conditions, the tobacco plantations were often worked by negro slaves, slavery having been established in the colony as early as 1625 or 1626. The West India Company owned a number of negroes who could be hired for heavy work, and they were found to be so useful to the settlers that

New Amsterdam

the Directors of the Company "granted liberty to particular merchants to send two or three ships to the coast of Africa to purchase slaves, & to promote the settlement of the country by importing the same." [1] We know that in 1655 Isaack owned a "negro" and that in 1664 he and his partner, Johannes Verveelen, were active bidders at a slave auction. The average value of a slave was about $180.

The greatest difficulty lay in securing good domestic servants. The first Dutch minister sent to the colony, Rev. Jonas Michaelius, shortly after his arrival had written home: "Maid servants are not here to be had, at least none whom they can advise me to take; and the Angola slave women are thievish, lazy and useless trash." [2]

Isaack seems to have had similar troubles, for he finally sent to Holland for a servant. A certain Janneken Cornelis was engaged for him and her passage paid, also her board while at sea. She arrived early in March, 1658, but within a few days Isaack de Forest was in court, saying that "she sought to get out of the house as soon as she was with him, abusing him and his wife very spitefully." Isaack demanded restitution of her passage and

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. xiv, p. 209.

[2] Letter of Rev. Jonas Michaelius written in New Amsterdam in 1628, N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. ii, p. 768.

board monies and was allowed to keep her "goods" until she should repay him.[1] *New Amsterdam*

Isaack was now definitely established in New Amsterdam as a "Free Merchant." Having been a tobacco planter, it was natural that he should have engaged immediately in the tobacco business and we soon find him buying crops and storing them in the old church building, then used as a warehouse; for the Church in the Fort was so nearly finished that it could be occupied. He continued for a number of years to deal in tobacco, but as plantations were destroyed and crops became less abundant, he adopted other means of livelihood as well. He bought and sold beaver skins, and at one time or another owned a great deal of land, which he sold again, presumably at a profit; he built houses and disposed of them, and also lent money at interest.

Most important of all, perhaps, he had become even before 1653 a brewer on a large scale. It is said that one of the greatest hardships endured by the earliest settlers was the absence of their beloved malt liquors. Very soon, however, they began to import malt to remedy this deficiency, and large quantities of beer were consumed. Families purchased it by the barrel or half-barrel, judges drank it on the bench and farmhands in the fields. No ceremony, either civil or religious, was complete without it. At auctions it was supposed to make

[1] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. II, pp. 350–51.

New Amsterdam

men's purses more accessible and even at funerals it facilitated the mourning. So constant was its use that it was deemed wise to enact a law forbidding the tapping of beer during the hours of divine service! From all this it will be seen that an expert brewer held no unimportant position in the community.

When Johannes Verveelen came to New Amsterdam in 1657, he and Isaack formed a partnership and together they conducted a very successful brewery. Not every one could pursue this trade; for the authorities in their efforts to have only really good beer on sale had passed a stringent ordinance that "only those shall be brewers who are known to have sufficient skill in the art."

Isaack's malt-house was near his residence on Brouwer Straet and it is known that soon after he took Verveelen for his partner he owned a good-sized brew-house on a large, irregular lot on the north side of "Prinsen Straet" (now Beaver Street), a short distance to the east of the Heere Graft. To supply the hops necessary for brewing, he had a hop-garden (as well as an orchard) on "Norman's Bight." [1] For some reason, however, Isaack decided to give up his trade of brewer and on Febru-

[1] This was evidently at "Noorman's kil," the Long Island shore of the East River near the village of Boswyck (Bushwick). Isaack had at an early date obtained a lot there from Pieter Jansen Trimbol, the "Noorman" or Norwegian.

ary 14, 1662, he sold his brew-house to his brother-brewers, Johannes and Daniel Verveelen.[1] *New Amsterdam*

There was a certain well-known brewer in New Amsterdam, Jacob Wolphertsen van Couwenhoven by name, who was a great friend of Isaack, even if he was his rival in trade. He was one of the city burghers, a church warden, and held many important offices; but although he was so highly thought of and was affectionately called "Old Jacob" by everybody, he was obliged frequently to appear before the magistrate because of embarrassments in money matters. There came a time in 1656 when things looked rather desperate for him. He was already greatly in debt because of the handsome stone house he had built for himself on Hoogh Street, though that did not long deter him from undertaking the construction of "the great stone brew-house," as it was usually called, on the corner of Hoogh Street and the Heere Graft. Creditors began to press for payment, and his fellow-brewer, Isaack, was obliged to come to his aid. Isaack therefore presented a petition to the Director-General and Council, asking that he be allowed to contract with van Couwenhoven for all the strong beer the latter could brew in a year, hoping that by this means "so well situated a brewery as that [of van Couwenhoven] may not be abandoned, but to the contrary may become the means to maintain decently that man with his

[1] Valentine's Manual, 1865, p. 687.

New Amsterdam

family, while otherwise his ruin might be unavoidable." [1] Isaack's request was granted but the relief seems to have been only temporary.

One of "Old Jacob's" weaknesses was that he could never resist a bargain in real estate, even if he did not have the wherewithal to pay for it. On April 8, 1656, the Director and Council sold "de Oude Kerck" and lot at auction,[2] and van Couwenhoven, true to his character, purchased it. He had owned it but a few weeks when his friend Isaack again came to his assistance by purchasing it from him on September 1, 1656.[3] Not a month later, when Isaack was apparently about to pay for his purchase, two of Jacob's creditors came into court demanding that Isaack pay to them the price of the building and lot instead of giving it to van Couwenhoven. This the court thought just and it ordered the "Vendue master to lift the monies from Foreest" and pay them to the petitioners. By this transaction Isaack got possession of the old church building.[4]

Since the Church in the Fort had been finished, the "mean barn," as the old church was sometimes called, had become a sort of lumber house, where the West India Company stored merchandise of all

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 178; Council Minutes, vol. VIII, p. 307.

[2] Deeds and Conveyances, 1654–1658, p. 143. City Clerk's Office, City Hall, New York.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Lot now called 39 Pearl Street.

SMALL DUTCH YACHT OR SLOOP, ABOUT 1630, PROBABLY SUCH A SEA-GOING YACHT AS WAS OWNED BY ISAACK

From "History of Yachting," by Arthur H. Clark

kinds, including wood, it is said, so that prisoners could there work out their sentences sawing wood. No wonder that Isaack felt that this lovely spot right on the shore of the East River deserved to have a better-looking building upon it, and he forthwith began either to alter or to rebuild. Probably he removed the old church and built in its place a dwelling-house. It is on record that in October of that year he brought suit against two certain men for "having failed to deliver, according to agreement the stone and lime contracted for the cellar."[1] This was especially annoying and reprehensible inasmuch as Isaack had bought a small "yacht" in which they could transport the stone. After the building was finished, Isaack proudly asserted that he had "built on the above mentioned lot a house which is an ornament to the city." *New Amsterdam*

Isaack also appealed to the Council for a grant of the church lane which adjoined the church lot, saying that as the house occupied the full width of the lot, he had no space left in which "to store wood or other necessaries."[2] His request was granted.

Because of the early associations connected with this site or possibly because the original building was simply altered and not rebuilt, it was customary to allude to it as the "Oude Kerck." It was still standing in 1718.

[1] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. II, p. 213.
[2] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 383.

New Amsterdam

This was not the only house put up by Isaack in New Amsterdam. It has been said that "De Forest expended his means in building several fine houses in New Amsterdam." One of these houses was on the small lot which had been granted to him in 1645, the lot which was 4 rods 1 foot wide, 5 rods 9 feet long, and faced on the Marcktveldt. This was the lot which was connected by a passageway with his own garden and on it he built a dwelling-house, and the entire lot he "actually fenced with clap-boards," though what kind of a fence they would make is not quite clear. This lot and house Isaack on August 2, 1649,[1] transferred to Willem Beeckman, the burgher who in 1650, as we know, bought Isaack's bouwery also.

Still another house in the vicinity belonged to him; this was in the rear of his own lot and was on the south side of the Marcktveldt Steeg. This house he sold to his nephew, Jan La Montagne, Jr.,[2] on September 26, 1655.[3] Jan had sailed for Amsterdam in 1654 with a consignment of tobacco valued at 1,000 guilders belonging to his Uncle Isaack.[3] This he was to sell and to invest the proceeds in merchandise according to his uncle's list; the merchandise was apparently to be resold in New

[1] Calendar of Dutch MSS., p. 47; Register of Provincial Secretary, vol. III, p. 46.

[2] Valentine's Manual, 1861, p. 581.

[3] Year Book Holland Society of New York, 1900, pp. 172, 174.

Amsterdam. A certain Vincent Pikes was Jan's partner in this venture. While in Amsterdam Jan fell in love with and married Petronella Pikes, the sister of his partner, and it was upon his return to New Amsterdam that he bought the house on the Marcktveldt Steeg from his Uncle Isaack as a home for his bride. *New Amsterdam*

Immediately after Isaack's arrival in the town he had become actively interested in its public affairs. Director-General Kieft, who was then blamed on every hand for the Indian outrages, which it was felt his policy had caused, deemed it wise to secure the coöperation of the people in the government of the colony, and in the early fall of 1643 he summoned the "Commonalty of the Manhattans," fifty-six of its citizens, including Isaack, to elect five or six persons from among themselves to aid in the government and to "weigh maturely the articles laid before them." [1] In this way the popular board of "Eight Men" was elected. The services of the Eight Men were dispensed with some years later, and a new board, the "Nine Men," was created in 1647. They were to "give their opinion on matters submitted to them by the Director and Council" and were "to attend for a month in rotation on the weekly court as long as the civil cases were before it and to act subsequently as referees or arbitrators." [2]

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. I, pp. 191–92.
[2] O'Callaghan, E. B. Register of New Netherland, p. 55.

New Amsterdam

Isaack became one of the Nine Men in 1652. The year following Isaack's appointment, a radical change took place in the government. The city was incorporated and the Nine Men were superseded by a court of magistrates consisting of a schout, two burgomasters, and five schepens. "Isaacq de Foreest," as the Dutch usually wrote his name, became a schepen a few years later.

Before this appointment, however, he had held several other offices. He was several times appointed selectman and as such was one of six who in 1651 witnessed an important conference between Stuyvesant and the Indians on the Delaware River.[1] A few years later he and six others met the burgomasters and schepens "to confer about the decline of zeewan (wampum) and the cause thereof." In 1653 he was appointed inspector of tobacco, in 1655 and 1656 farmer of the revenues of the weigh house, and in 1660 farmer of the revenue of tavern excise.

Still another position he filled. He was made one of the "orphan masters of New Amsterdam," and there were, alas, many orphans in those days when so many fathers had been butchered by Indians. Sometimes the orphan masters had to ransom children whom savages had carried off. Isaack in this capacity once paid 60 guilders ($24) ransom for a little boy and 94 guilders ($38) for a little girl. The interests of the fatherless children of both Swits and

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. 1, p. 597.

Teunissen were looked after by this board even while the children themselves were still in captivity. *New Amsterdam*

The records show that Isaack de Forest was a public-spirited man. He was one of those who responded when Stuyvesant asked for a voluntary subscription for repairing and strengthening the outer works of the city, and was among the twenty-one prominent citizens who in 1653 promised the burgomasters and schepens to submit to certain taxes "for paying the public expenses and keeping in repair the works"[1] of the city. When in 1655 there was a proposal to repave Brouwer Straet, he united with the nine other property owners on that street who offered to bear the cost themselves. "It was the first street in the city that was paved," they wrote when making their offer, adding: "The said street is becoming unfit for public use . . . we should be still inclined to pave the said street with round stones on the first favorable opportunity . . . but we have deemed it proper to propose the same to your Honors . . . and request your permission, as to surveys, levels, drains . . . and we oblige ourselves to furnish the stone, the raising and lowering necessary thereto, each to the extent of his house and lot, and further to follow the general rules relative to paving and expense, with the request that the unwilling be constrained to the same." [2]

[1] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. I, pp. 67, 127.
[2] Ibid., p. 300.

New Amsterdam

The request was granted and the fence viewers were summoned to assist the ten property owners of Brouwer Straet. The constraining of the unwilling does not, however, seem to have been successful; for on January 4, 1658, the record says once more that Brouwer Straet "is inconvenient to be used in foul and bad weather" and it is evident that the repaving has never been accomplished. On March 28, 1658, Isaack de Forest, who had been appointed one of the two "overseers and administrators" of the street, appeared in court complaining, "The inhabitants of the Brewers Street who imposed on themselves the tax for the benefit of the street in order to its being paved, are unwilling to pay, requesting that the magistrates may be pleased to order payment." [1] Possibly he did not even then get the redress asked for, as he was in court again six weeks afterward praying to be discharged from the superintendence of Brouwer Straet. It is said that its subsequent name, Stone Street (used after the English occupation), was given because it was the first city street to be paved with stones.

It is not surprising that Isaack, having performed all these dignified and useful public services, should have longed for the honorable title of "Great Burgher." Only great burghers could fill certain public offices. They were also free from arrest for petty misdemeanors and enjoyed various other privileges.

[1] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. II, p. 367.

DUTCH COTTAGE IN BEAVER STREET, NEW YORK, 1679

From Valentine's Manual, 1853

New Amsterdam

For instance, a great burgher's property was exempt from confiscation if he were convicted of a capital offense,[1] which was an important exemption at a time when the punishment for so many misdeeds was a sentence of death.

We therefore find under date of April 26, 1657, this record: "Isaac de Foreest requests by petition the privilege of the Great Burgher Right, as he has been in the country for over 20 years, has built considerably in this city and performed many services." The decree of the burgomasters says that the "Petitioner's request cannot be granted, according to the order of the Director-General and Council and the explanation of the Great and Small Burgher Right,"[2] though we are given no clue as to what this explanation really was.

Four days after this decree, possibly to console him for his disappointment, he was made a "Small Burgher," a position carrying with it fewer privileges. He had not long to wait, however, for the coveted title; for on January 28, 1658, Director-General Stuyvesant and the Council of New Netherland, addressing a rather pompous document to "Honble, Beloved, Particular, Schout, Burgomasters and Schepens of the City of New Amsterdam," said, among other things, "We have taken into serious consideration and reflection the small number of

[1] O'Callaghan, E. B. Register of New Netherland, p. 173.
[2] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. VII, p. 157.

New Amsterdam Great Burghers and the consequent trifling change of persons fit therefor; for this and other reasons us moving, we have found it advantageous for this city to increase the said number of Great Burghers and to reinforce it with six old and suitable persons." [1] Isaack was among the "six old and suitable persons." That he acquitted himself well we may assume; for we later find reference to him as one of the "most influential burghers and inhabitants of the city."

Two years before Isaack became a great burgher there had been talk of making him one of the city magistrates. When the annual election of burgomasters and schepens took place on January 31, 1656, the outgoing magistrates were asked to nominate as their successors "such persons as are of good fame and name and considered worthy to fill such office and who would be inclined to appear with honor in their place." [2] There were eight nominations for the position of schepen, Isaack's name being included, but the honor of an election did not follow the nomination. Two years later, however, on February 2, 1658, five days after he became a great burgher, he was duly elected "Schepen."

No doubt Burgher Isaack's heart swelled with pride when he found himself one of the high and mighty ones of the town — but pride must have a

[1] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. II, p. 315.
[2] Ibid., p. 26.

MAP OF NEW AMSTERDAM, "THE DUKE'S PLAN," SEPTEMBER, 1661

From the original in the British Museum

LONGE · ISLELAND ·
A DESCRIPTION OF THE TOWNE OF MANNADOS OR NEW AMSTERDAM
1664
Hudsons · River
The Maine Land

fall. Shortly after his appointment he was obliged to appear before the schout in order to rescue his son Jan from the difficulties in which he had become involved. It appears that on the previous Thanksgiving Jan (then a lad of fourteen) and two of his friends "ran fuddled and tipsy along the street." The schout claimed that they had taken the beer out of van Brugh's cellar and condemned the three boys to "sit two days in close confinement on bread and small beer, without receiving anything else, or to be fined, each to pay the sum of 12 guilders." *New Amsterdam*

Isaack succeeded in convincing the schout that the drink had been given to the boys by van Brugh's negroes, and so the suit was dismissed, the parents being told to "punish their children for their committed offence and charge them not to repeat it." [1] Such are the trials which sometimes come to a father, no matter how exalted his position may be.

The year 1664 was memorable in New Amsterdam — the year when the English, having given no previous warning, took possession of the city without firing a shot. The colony, just before this invasion, was again having trouble with the Indians and so was paying slight attention to its English neighbors. Rumors finally reached New Amsterdam that an invading fleet was approaching, and the inhabitants began in a leisurely way to strengthen the fortifica-

[1] Records of New Amsterdam, vol. v, p. 2.

New Amsterdam

tions of the place. Great consternation was felt, however, when on August 26th an English man-of-war entered the Lower Bay, followed on August 28th by two others and an armed transport filled with soldiers, all under the command of Colonel Richard Nicolls.

While the first English ship was on guard alone, a certain Dutchman, Claes Verbraeck, then on his way home in his sloop from the South River, came sailing up the bay. The English promptly boarded the sloop and made him a prisoner. After being interrogated and detained for some time, he was allowed to proceed to New Amsterdam, no doubt carrying with him startling rumors of the intentions of the English. Many depredations were committed on shore by the invaders and during one of them a Dutch soldier was wounded and captured. After this the hostile vessels were moved up to the Narrows, and it was at this time that Isaack de Forest was arrested and took an unexpected part, even if a small one, in determining the fate of the city.[1]

It is on record that during this time "a burgher coming from without" made his appearance upon the scene and was made prisoner by the English. Apparently only two men (besides the wounded soldier) were taken prisoners by the English, Claes Verbraeck and this "burgher coming from without." Now we know that Burgher Isaack was arrested at

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. II, pp. 410, 411, 501–03.

about this time and so there seems little doubt that this voyager from "without" — that is, from outside the Lower Bay — was Isaack de Forest, who was very likely then returning in his sea-going yacht from a voyage to the South River or Virginia in search of tobacco, and was sailing along, all unconscious of what was taking place. He did not, however, long remain unconscious of the hostile intentions of the English vessels, for they gave him a volley of grapeshot. This brought him to his senses, but not in time to prevent his being taken prisoner. His release soon followed, on August 31st, and he returned in his boat to New Amsterdam, bringing with him the wounded soldier who had previously been captured. *New Amsterdam*

Once on shore, he was closely questioned by Stuyvesant and the Dutch authorities as to the strength of the invaders. The English had probably seen to it that he should not underestimate their numbers, and their ruse was successful; for he apparently reported that Colonel Nicolls had a force of 800 soldiers ready to attack New Amsterdam. As the Dutch had at this time only about 150 soldiers in the fort and as the able-bodied men in the town would not much more than double that number, the surrender of the city was deemed unavoidable. Stuyvesant absolutely refused to acquiesce, however, until he was forced to do so by the demands of the people.

New Amsterdam

The Director-General and Council received on September 5th a "Remonstrance of the people of New Netherland . . . against resisting the English and urging a capitulation." "We are," said they, "about fifteen hundred innocent souls, only two hundred and fifty of whom are capable of bearing arms . . . Four of the English King's frigates are now lying in the road . . . with six hundred soldiers. . . . [Their] threats would not have been at all regarded, could your Honors or we, your petitioners, expect the smallest aid or succor. But (God help us!), whether we turn us for assistance to the north or to the south, to the east or to the west, 'tis all vain! . . .

"Wherefore, to prevent and arrest all the aforesaid misfortunes, we humbly, and in bitterness of heart, implore your Honors not to reject the conditions of so generous a foe. . . . Otherwise (which God forbid), are we obliged . . . to protest against and call down on your Honors the vengeance of heaven for all the innocent blood which shall be shed in consequence of your Honors' obstinacy." [1] Our friend Isaack was among the ninety-three signers of this petition.

Another thing which hastened the decision to surrender was that the English ships had moved up the river, anchored near the fort, and were preparing to bombard the town.

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. II, p. 249.

New Amsterdam

Very reluctantly Stuyvesant decided to capitulate when it was clear that no other course was open to him, and on September 6th twelve delegates, half of them English and half Dutch, met at Stuyvesant's bouwery and arranged the details. On September 8th the evacuation of the fort took place, the garrison marching out "with all their arms, flying colors and beating drums," according to the terms of the capitulation.

After the surrender had taken place and the citizens had discovered that the English force was no stronger than that of the Dutch, great indignation was expressed against poor Isaack, who "greatly exaggerating the English force, was believed." [1] We can well imagine, therefore, that he was for the moment hardly in favor with either the authorities or his fellow-townsmen.

The Dutch were the more incensed by the action of the English because the two countries were at this time supposed to be at peace with one another. The troops were now quartered on the city, to which the inhabitants much objected, saying that "they had rather contribute than lodge soldiers." A general assessment, which continued for six weeks, was therefore levied to support them, Isaack's portion being two florins weekly.

New York

Stuyvesant then went into retirement, although he did not leave Manhattan, and Colonel Nicolls

[1] N.Y. Colonial Documents, vol. II, p. 502.

New York became the governor. Governor Nicolls after the occupation did all he could to appease the people. The Dutch magistrates were continued in office, and the Dutch land patents were confirmed. In fact, Nicolls was a wise and conciliatory ruler, but the Hollanders naturally liked their own ways the best and it took them a long time to get used to a province and city named New York and to a mayor, aldermen, and sheriff instead of their accustomed schout, burgomasters, and schepens. Many who could not reconcile themselves to the change returned to Holland. Isaack took the oath of allegiance, as did most of his friends and family, but there is no record of his ever having held public office under the English.

New Amsterdam The newcomers did not very long hold undisturbed possession of New York. On July 29, 1673, nine years after they had captured it, an alarm was given that twenty-one Dutch vessels, including nine men-of-war, were off Staten Island and were preparing for an attack. All the inhabitants, most of whom were, of course, in sympathy with the invaders, knew that both soldiers and defenses were ridiculously inadequate and that there was really nothing with which to protect the city. A show of resistance was made, however, both sides firing for "about an hour," and then the Dutch soldiers landed on the North River shore, preparatory to marching on the fort. They were received with great enthusiasm by the Dutch inhabitants. One

account says that they were met by 400 burghers "all armed," while an English record tells us that the Dutch hastened to welcome their fellow-countrymen "with all the demonstrations of joy which they could make." *New Amsterdam*

We presume that Isaack was among the rejoicing burghers — in spirit, if not in actual demonstration, for it is known that he was "sickly" at this time. He never reached the appointed limit of threescore years and ten; men lived hard in those days and he had had many trials as well as blessings. His life in his adopted country had been honorable and its end was near.

On the fourth of June, 1672, "being Tuesday in the morning, about 9 o'clock," an affecting incident in the history of Isaack and Sara his wife took place, probably in their own "best room." They were in consultation with William Bogardus, the notary public. The subject under discussion was the making of a joint will, each testator wishing to leave everything to the one who should survive, a customary arrangement in those days.

In the "public Instrument" then drawn up, Dutch copies of which are still to be found in the New York Hall of Records and at Albany, Bogardus began by noting the following facts: "Appeared in their own persons Mr. Isaack fforeest, Brewer of this city and Sarah Truix, his lawfull wife, knowne to me notaris. The Testator sickly and the Testa-

New Amsterdam

trix sound of body, but both fully using their understanding memory and speech as outwardly appeared and could not be perceived to the contrary, — who considering the fragility of men, certainty of death and its uncertaine hour being not willing to depart this world before they have disposed of their temporall goods and therefore have in the best forme and manner possible most firme and freely as they declared, made their Testament." [1]

Isaack and Sara then named their seven children (all that had survived from the fourteen born to them) as their "only and universal heirs": Susannah, who had "married with" Peter De Rymier, Johannes, Philip, Isaac, Hendricus, Maria, David, "and the children, which in the future by Gods blessing may come." Susannah, their eldest, was then aged twenty-seven, and David, their baby, was less than three years old.[2]

After speaking of the "speciall love and affecon received mutually in matrimony and still if God pleased to receive," each testator left "all his or her goods" to be used "by the survivant without contradiction of any during his or her lifetime or till a new marriage." In the event of a remarriage, before its "solemnization" the survivant was to place in the hands of the children's guardians one

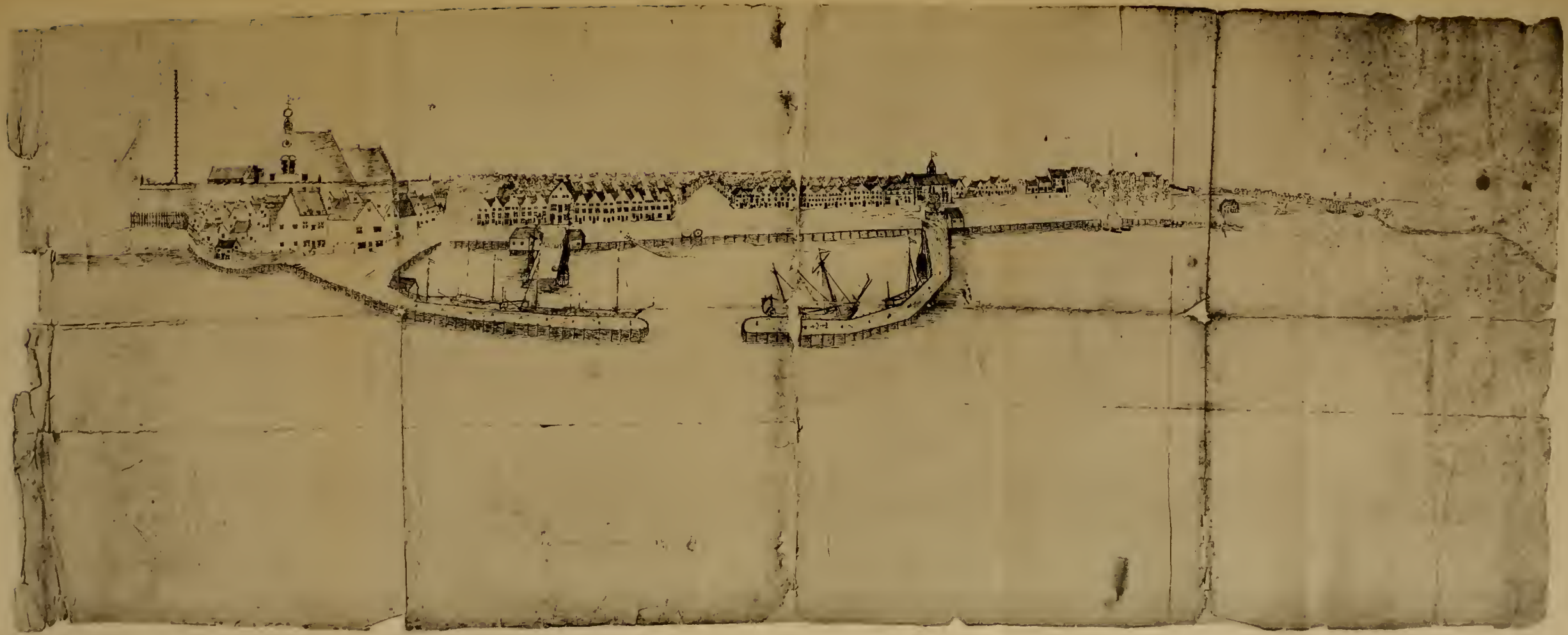
[1] Hall of Records, N. Y. C. Records of Wills, vols. III–IV.

[2] For the names and baptismal dates of the fourteen children of Isaack and Sara, see Appendix, p. 285.

DONCKAERTS AND SLUYTER'S DRAWING OF NEW YORK FROM BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, 1679

NEW AMSTERDAM SHORTLY AFTER ISAACK'S DEATH

Owned by the Long Island Historical Society



half of the deceased parent's portion with the express condition that the remaining parent was to enjoy the income thereof until each child should "come to their age or wedlock," at which time each was to receive his or her just proportion. Until this time the survivant should be obliged "to maintain the said children honestly, providing them with victuals and clothes, causing their schooling for reading and writing, alsoe to cause them to learn an art or trade whereby they may live when shall come their age." The guardians mentioned, who were to act with the survivant, were Mr. Jacob Kip, their "cosin," [1] and Mr. Symon Johns Romeyn, their "trusty and known friend." *New Amsterdam*

Little remains to complete the story of Isaack's life so far as we can know it. July 25, 1674, two years after Isaack had made his will, he was mentioned for the last time on the court records. His case was postponed till the next court day, probably because of illness on his part. At any rate, we know that he died soon afterward, aged fifty-six; and although we do not know the exact day of his death, it must have been between July 25, 1674, and September 26th of the same year, for on the latter date Sara was spoken of as Isaack's widow.

His death was without doubt immediately followed, according to custom, by the tolling of the

[1] He had married Maria, daughter of Johannes La Montagne.

New Amsterdam

church bell, which was the signal for the "aanspreecker," or funeral inviter, to start on his rounds, announcing the day and hour of the funeral and bidding relatives and friends to attend. Such was the etiquette in those days that no one would have thought of attending a funeral without an invitation. The "aanspreecker" was attired in gloomy black—knee breeches, long cloak, shoe buckles, and a cocked hat from which fluttered long streamers of black crape.

Meanwhile great preparations would be in progress in Isaack's late home. At that time, the services were always held in the house of the deceased. Beer was provided in abundance, half a barrel or more, with rum besides for the men and Madeira for the women. There were also the "doodkoecken," sweet cakes with caraway seeds in them, which were invariably served at every proper funeral, and which Sara and her daughters probably prepared. Tobacco and pipes must not be forgotten, for they were indispensable. Even the domine smoked as he sat beside the coffin in the "best room."

After the services the friends who were privileged to be bearers carried Isaack on his bier to the grave. Later, according to custom, each bearer received some kind of memento of the deceased. Sometimes this was a funeral ring, but more often a spoon with a head or figure on the handle. We know from the

records that such spoons were given at the time of his brother Hendrick's burial. *New Amsterdam*

The interment was undoubtedly in the "Old Grave Yard" of the Dutch church, where Hendrick had very probably been buried by Domine Bogardus in 1637, although no church records seem to be extant for that early date. The graveyard was 100 feet square and was situated on the west side of Broadway, north of Morris Street (now Nos. 31–37 Broadway). Even in 1674, when Isaack was buried there, it was in a state of great neglect, and three years later the city voted to discontinue its use. The bodies were then removed and it was divided into four city lots and sold.

Was Isaack a rich man? In 1664 he was spoken of as one of the "most affluent inhabitants of the city," and once he was assessed 100 florins "for the defense of the city," while no one was assessed more than 200 florins. At another time he sent to Holland a cargo of tobacco worth 1000 guilders. Yet the estate disclosed by the will so lovingly and quaintly worded was apparently small. It was estimated at only 1,500 guilders ($600), while those of other citizens of the time were placed as high as 50,000 or even 80,000 guilders. Now 1,500 guilders seems an incredibly small estimate for the value of Isaack's estate, especially in view of his large commercial and real estate transactions. The sum mentioned must surely be a mistake, since shortly after his death the new

New Amsterdam

English rulers of New York placed the "estimated wealth of his widow Sarah de Foreest" at 12,000 guilders ($4,800). For this and other reasons it seems likely that Isaack's estate should have been put at 15,000 instead of 1,500 guilders. Isaack probably had about enough on which to live comfortably, to endow his daughter when she married, and to aid his sons when they started in business for themselves.

He had lived at the period when the New World was being developed and civilized, and he himself had aided in its development. When he moved into New Amsterdam in 1643, it had about 400 male inhabitants; at the time of his death in 1674 the number could not have been much less than 4,000.

He had dwelt under many flags. The son of Walloon parents, he had spent his childhood in Holland, had then come to New Amsterdam as a "freeman" under Dutch rule, had continued to live there under the English administration, and was then once again governed by the Dutch, who might almost be considered in the light of his foster-parents. He did not live quite long enough to witness the third change of rulers in New Amsterdam, which took place when the country of his adoption, after being held by the Dutch for fourteen months only, was formally surrendered to the English on November 10, 1674, in accordance with a treaty between Holland and England.

New Amsterdam

Isaack's widow, Sara du Trieux,[1] lived in the Brouwer Straet house [2] for eighteen years after his death but never remarried, and on November 9, 1692, being then about sixty-seven years old, she followed her husband.

A difficulty at once arose regarding the disposition of Sara du Trieux's estate. As a result of the joint will, there had never been any necessity for administrators during her life, but the case was different now that she too was gone, and the children therefore, in December, 1692, petitioned Governor Fletcher of New York that two of Isaack's sons might be appointed to this position. Accordingly, on December 19, 1692, letters of administration were granted to Johannes and Henry, the two eldest sons who then lived in the city.

As all of the seven children who survived her were grown and some of them had children of their own, a distribution of their mother's estate seemed advisable. Consequently, on May 2, 1693, six months after Sara's death, the house on Brouwer Straet in which the family had lived for nearly forty years, was sold by the children to Harman Rutgers, a brewer from Albany.

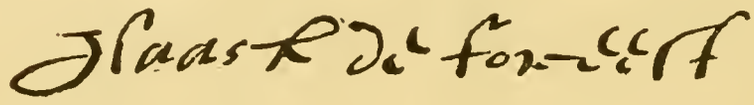
Thus must "Finis" be written after the names of

[1] In the church record she is spoken of as "Sarah Philips," a usual Dutch method of indicating that her father's name was Philip.

[2] The Produce Exchange on Stone Street now covers the site of Isaack's house and garden.

New Amsterdam

the honorable Great Burgher Isaack de Forest and his wife Sara du Trieux. And so had Jesse's dream at last come true, for his son and his son's sons were at home in the New World.



V

DAVID DE FOREST

The Connecticut Pioneer

DAVID, the fourteenth and youngest child of Isaack de Forest and Sara du Trieux, was born in 1669 and was therefore five years old when his father died. He was the third of the name among Isaack's children, two Davids (one born in 1663 and one in 1666) having preceded him. The record of his baptism is still to be seen in the register of the Church in the Fort, and on a certain old deed his signature is almost as black as when he wrote it; but otherwise we find few traces of him in the annals of New York. *New Amsterdam*

This deed concerns a piece of land which had belonged to Mistress Judith Stuyvesant, wife of Peter Stuyvesant, and which was in 1692 transferred by her children to Nicholas Bayard, the old New York merchant. On the deed David's name appears in good company, the other witnesses being Philip Schuyler, A. De Peyster (Mayor of New York), Peter King, and other men equally prominent.

In the "Petition from the children of Isaacq de Foreest" to Governor Fletcher (December, 1692) concerning their mother's estate, he was one of "ye Petits." His signature on the deed is "Davÿd" and

New Amsterdam

on the petition "Davydt." Thus his French name was given a Dutch spelling.

David was not made an administrator, possibly because he was the youngest (he was then but twenty-three), possibly because he was at that time planning to leave the city. The death of his mother may have weakened the home tie, or he may have felt that New York, even at that early day, was becoming overcrowded and that there was lack of opportunity in it for a vigorous young man.

Stratford

Be that as it may, David left the city of his birth, probably in 1694, and started for Connecticut in a row-boat, according to tradition! Let us hope that it had at least an adjustable mast and sail to aid him on his perilous voyage through the wild waters of the Hellegat and the varying tides of Long Island Sound! In due time he reached the Housatonic River, and after rowing one and a half miles upstream to a little creek which wound its way among grassy sedges on the western shore, he came to the young and prosperous town of Stratford.

A few words about the founding of this place, which has been called a "de Forest hearthstone," may not be amiss. "Cupheag," as the territory was called by its Indian owners, was destined to become one of the earliest "plantations" in the Connecticut Colony. In May, 1637, the representatives of this colony, then assembled at Hartford, decided that a war of extermination should be waged against the

THE CREEK, WHERE DAVID, ACCORDING TO TRADITION, LANDED

Pequot Indians, who had been harassing the colonists in a quite intolerable manner. Seventy-seven of the settlers therefore sallied forth, and after various minor fights succeeded in destroying the Pequots at their stronghold in a swamp near the site of the present town of Fairfield. During their march the colonists noticed the lovely and fertile country through which they passed and some of them then determined to return and make a settlement on the "goodly land of Cupheag." *Stratford*

Accordingly, in 1639 — two years after the expedition against the Indians, nineteen years after the Pilgrim Fathers had landed at Plymouth, and at about the time when the de Forests were building their houses and cultivating their bouweries at Muscoota — seventeen families, who had travelled, overland probably, under the leadership of their pastor, the Rev. Adam Blakeman, arrived to take possession of Cupheag. They were members of the Connecticut Colony,[1] the "Puritans" of the original Massachusetts Bay Company, and had come from Hartford and Wethersfield.

The Rev. Thomas Hooker, one of their leaders, in 1638 had preached a remarkable sermon, in which he said: "The choice of public magistrates belongs unto the people by God's own allowance." When, therefore, the same year the Connecticut Colony adopted

[1] This must not be confused with the New Haven Colony, which was an entirely separate organization, the two colonies not being united until 1662.

Stratford a constitution, it was more liberal than that of the other colonies. Heretofore only church members had been allowed to take any part in the government, but the constitution now gave to all who took the oath of allegiance to the commonwealth the right to vote for the governor, legislature, and magistrates.

The plantation of Stratford was under the rule of the Connecticut Colony until 1662, when a new charter was granted by Charles II to the united colonies of Connecticut and New Haven. Under this charter the government was placed in the hands of a so-called "General Assembly." This Assembly was to meet semi-annually and was "to consist of the governor, deputy-governor and twelve assistants with the more popular element of two deputies from each town or city." [1] It was all-powerful and it constituted a system of government which was in the main satisfactory, as the colonists really ruled themselves, though they were nominally subject to the crown of Great Britain.

Unfortunately the earliest records of Stratford, those before 1651, are missing, and it is supposed that they were destroyed by fire.[2] It is known, how-

[1] Hollister, Gideon H. Connecticut History, vol. 1, p. 209.

[2] Even the town records of a later date are very difficult to decipher. The scribes were extremely economical in the matter of paper and the last five or six lines on a page are usually so closely crowded together as to be almost illegible. Some of the early records have to be read through a thin silk with which they have been covered in order to preserve them.

ever, that the first settlers built their houses at Sandy Hollow, in the southern part of the present town. *Stratford*

The original township of Stratford, situated in a beautiful tract of country already partly cleared and cultivated by the Indians, was twelve miles long from north to south and seven miles wide, which territory is now included in the townships of Stratford, Huntington, Trumbull, Monroe, and part of Bridgeport. The subdivisions of Stratford township were made later.

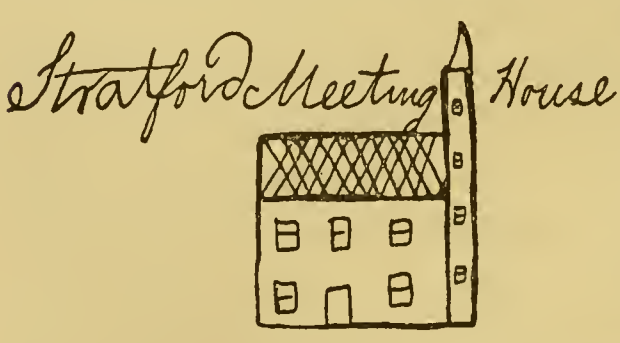
When the colonists took possession of the land, they laid out the new town on a liberal scale, with broad streets and a road (a mere "trail" at that time), called the "King's Highway," leading to Fairfield, a settlement which was begun only a few months after that of Stratford. They then located village plots and distributed them by the drawing of lots; hence came the name of "home lot," or, after a house was built upon it, "house lot." A home lot of about two and one-half acres was assigned to each settler, with a piece of meadow and a piece of upland for planting. A large part of the land, most of it virgin forest, was undivided and unassigned and was called "the common lands." [1]

[1] The "Common Field" was cultivated land owned by many or all of the proprietors and for reasons of economy surrounded by a general fence, each owner paying his proportion of the cost. There were, in fact, two common fields: the "Old Field" to the south of Stratford and the "New Field" somewhat farther north.

Stratford

Shortly after their arrival, the newcomers built a meeting-house of logs — a "Church of Christ," as they called it — necessarily of the simplest construction, but it boasted a most useful and at that time unusual possession, a bell. This bell was brought from England and is said to have been the earliest one in Connecticut. We can imagine the pride with which the church members obeyed its summons, while other less favored congregations were called to worship by drum beat or by the blowing of a conch shell. The first settlers built their houses close around this meeting-house, which in those uncertain times was not infrequently used as a refuge against attacks of the Indians.

In 1680, before the time of David's arrival, a new church had been built, on Watch-house Hill, some distance north from the site of the first structure, facing down Front Street — now called Elm — toward Sandy Hollow. This was a larger building than the old log meeting-house, measuring 48 by 42 feet, and was "fortified for security of women and children."



In it the congregation was seated according to rank and age. "Firstly, Magistrates and Commis-

sion Officers, according to their place of dignity. Secondly, all persons past the age of sixty years should be accounted honorable, notwithstanding their payments, and seated accordingly. Thirdly, all other persons under the age of sixty years should be seated according to their disbursements and payments." Later, when galleries were built, the order for seating there read: "The west side gallery with married men, the east side married women, and ancient bachelors and ancient maides the second seats." *Stratford*

The services were long, especially the sermon, at the beginning of which the minister turned the hour-glass, and it is hardly surprising that the boys became unruly and that it was necessary to appoint an officer "to watch over the disorderly persons in the meeting, and to use his discretion in striking any whom he finds so disorderly." After the sermon the presiding deacon rose and made proclamation, "As God hath prospered you, so freely give." Each member of the congregation then went forward in the order of his rank or office and handed his contribution to the deacon.

There was no silver alms basin in which the deacon could receive the gifts; such basins were costly and were rarely used in early New England, but the "First Church of Christ" in Stratford owned communion silver a-plenty. The accompanying photograph shows three of the most beautiful pieces — a

Stratford chalice and two caudle cups. The chalice was made by Jeremiah Dummer [1] of Boston (1645–1718) and was undoubtedly in use when David lived in Stratford. Perhaps it was given when the new church was built in 1680, for Dummer made silver prior to that date.

Church attendance was compulsory, or, at any rate, non-attendance was sternly punished. It is recorded that one man received a severe public whipping because he had stayed in bed instead of attending church while his only suit of clothes, then soaking wet, was being dried. Another was accused of "gaily staying at home, without any work of necessity or mercy obliging him thereto."

The church was the most important factor in the village life. In it was found the one relaxation (if attendance at service could be so called) from the arduous duties of the week. The sermon was the chief subject of conversation at every fireside until the ensuing Sabbath furnished a new one, and woe

[1] Almost all the old church silver in Connecticut was made by Boston silversmiths. This was undoubtedly due to the fact that there was constant friction between the New Englanders and the Dutch of Manhattan, so that the Connecticut parishes preferred to send all the way to Boston rather than to purchase silver from their obnoxious neighbors.

In the Puritan churches of Connecticut, prior to 1724, caudle cups were used almost entirely for the communion service rather than the chalices which were in use in the Church of England, which church the Puritans abhorred.

COMMUNION CHALICE AND CAUDLE CUPS, PROBABLY MADE BEFORE 1700

Owned by the First Church of Christ, Stratford

be to the minister whose theology did not come up to the standards of his congregation! [1] *Stratford*

At the time of David's arrival the minister of the meeting-house was the Reverend Israel Chauncey, his predecessor, Adam Blakeman, having died some years before. Israel Chauncey, son of the second president of Harvard College and himself a graduate from that institution in 1661, was a remarkable man, of whom it was said, "It was an untold blessing to be under his influence." He might have been termed a "medical missionary," for he studied medicine in order to attend to the physical as well as to the spiritual wants of his beloved people. He was installed in the Stratford church in 1665, when he was only twenty-one years of age, and for thirty-eight years he was its pastor. He was one of the founders of Yale College and in November, 1701, was chosen to be its first Rector or President. This honor he was, however, obliged to decline, owing to failing health.[2]

The early history of the de Forest family in Connecticut is interwoven with that of Stratford, and

[1] Needless to say, the church in Stratford was Congregational. The village contained no Episcopal church until 1707 and the one then built was the first of the denomination in the State of Connecticut.

[2] The Rev. Charles Chauncey (son of the Rev. Israel) was born in Stratford in 1668 and was therefore about David's age; he followed his father's profession and was one of the youngest of the twelve clergymen who in 1708 formulated the "Saybrook Platform."

Stratford many of its members married the descendants of some of the earliest settlers of that township, the makers of the Plantation. Several of their names will become very familiar to us as we follow the story of the de Forests and so it seems appropriate to mention a few of them here.[1]

Among the original colonists was Francis Nichols, a man eminent in the community and its first military officer; one of the duties of "Sergeant Nichols" was "to train the men and exercise them in military discipline."

John Peat (or Peet), who was probably among the earliest comers, was the first sexton of the meeting-house. It was the duty of "Goodman Peake" to ring the church bell and "to take care of boys who were unruly during worship." As he also rang the curfew bell "at nine of the clock" every evening, he could hardly have been very popular with the young people.

Moses Wheeler, who was born in England in 1598, was one of the first grantees of land in Stratford. His trade was that of shipwright; but when a ferry over the Housatonic River was at an early day established, he became its first lessee. This ferry was an important one, inasmuch as it formed a link in the post-road between New York and Boston.

[1] The facts given in the following biographical sketches are taken from Rev. Samuel Orcutt's History of Stratford and Bridgeport.

MOSES WHEELER'S COURT CUPBOARD, MADE DURING THE LATTER HALF OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

Owned by Mrs. Timothy Dwight, New Haven

Its charges were fixed by a law which read, "Ferried over for one half-penny per person, two-pence per horse or beast," — not a large enough charge, one would think, to enable any one to amass a fortune, and yet enough to induce at least three generations of Wheelers to continue to lease and operate the ferry during a period of about a century.[1] Moses Wheeler died in 1698, when one hundred years old, and his gravestone is perfectly legible even now in the old burying-ground at Stratford. *Stratford*

Joseph Hawley owned a home lot in Stratford in 1650 or earlier. He was a shipping merchant and one of the most prominent business men of the town; he both built and owned ships, made important purchases of land from the Indians, and was frequently chosen one of the two representatives sent by Stratford to the Connecticut General Assembly. He was also the tavern-keeper, in those days a most honorable vocation.

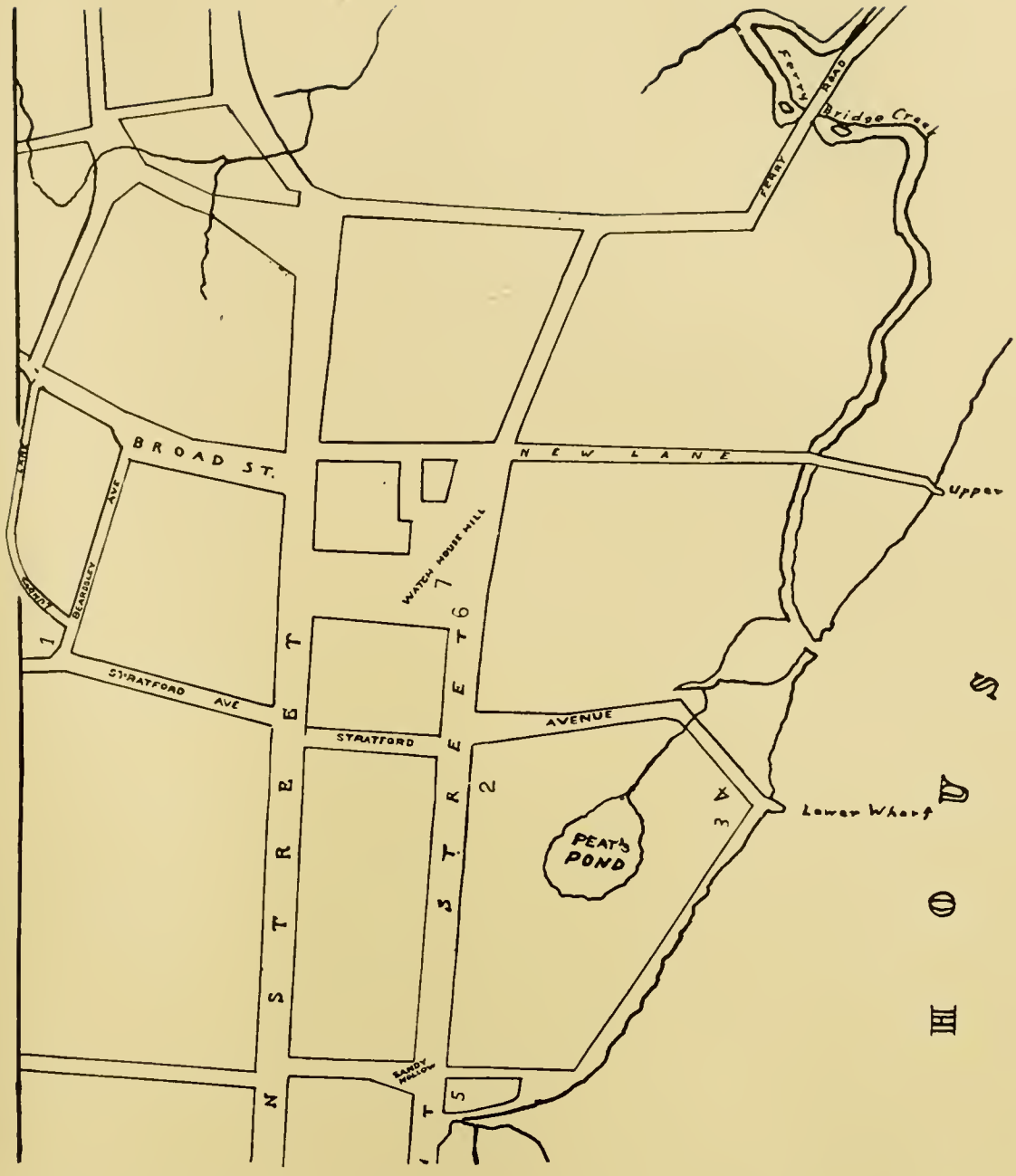
John Beach came to Stratford in 1660, purchased one of the original plots, "one house lot 2 acres," and in 1671 was appointed auctioneer, the old record reading: "John Beach was chosen crier for the town, and to be allowed four pence for everything he cries; that is to say for all sorts of cattle and all other things of smaller value."

[1] The first bridge across the Housatonic at Stratford was not built until 1800, and the road leading to the old ferry is still called the "Ferry Road."

Stratford

Two other somewhat younger sons of Stratford became eminent and added to her fame. The Rev. Samuel Johnson, who graduated from Yale College in 1714, became in 1723 one of the earliest ministers of the Episcopal church in Stratford. In 1754 he was elected the first president of King's College, New York, later called Columbia College. Of his son, the Hon. William Samuel Johnson, born in Stratford in 1727, the town had every reason to be proud. A graduate of Yale in 1744, he became ere long one of the leading men of the country. Many important political positions were given to him and he was one of the three representatives from Connecticut at the first Continental Congress, held in New York in 1765. With Roger Sherman and Oliver Ellsworth, he was appointed a delegate from Connecticut in 1787 to aid in the great work of framing a constitution for the United States. The same year he became the fourth President of King's College — a position which he filled with great honor until 1800, retiring afterward to his beloved Stratford home.

These sketches describe only a few of the eminent men who came to Stratford when the plantation was first started or who had their birth in the old town and added to her fame. They tell nothing of the affection in which her sons and daughters held "Old Stratford," a name by which she was lovingly called even when she was as yet quite young. To this day the town has a very quaint and distinctive



MAP OF A PART OF STRATFORD, CONNECTICUT, ADAPTED FROM THE EARLIEST KNOWN MAP, 1824

1. House of David de Forest
2. House of John Peat
3. House of Samuel Peat and Samuel de Forest
4. Old Barn of Moses Wheeler
5. First Meeting-House
6. Second Meeting-House
7. Third Meeting-House

atmosphere. The streets stretching with their broad grassy sward beneath beautiful arching elms are much as they were when first laid out. No bustle disturbs their quiet, and few strangers are to be seen in them. The old Green is still on Watch-house Hill (although some people now call it Academy Hill) and a somewhat newer plot, farther uptown, is yet known by the old name of Paradise Green. In many instances the old families continue to live in the old homes. Salt-box houses still abound; stair-cases still cling against the huge old central chimneys; bull's-eyes in the upper panels of front doors still furnish light as of old to tiny entries; and old-fashioned ladies with exquisite old-time hospitality still offer dandelion wine. *Stratford*

But we must no longer keep poor David standing, as it were, with one foot in his boat and one on the shore of the creek. We wish we had more details of the arrival and early life in Stratford of this young man. The first act of which we have any documentary knowledge is his marriage to Martha, daughter of Samuel Blagge.

To begin the history of David and Martha in an orderly manner we must first tell something of her father.[1] Tradition says that the name of Samuel

[1] It has been asserted that Samuel Blagge of Stratford was identical with Samuel Blagge of New York; but this is hardly probable for several reasons, one reason being that

Stratford Blagge's wife was Mary Boutel or Bontel, and we know that their family consisted of three sons and a daughter, Martha. Samuel was a merchant in Stratford; the first definite information we have about him is that he bought a certain part of the old meeting-house when it was torn down and sold at auction in 1681. Some of its old timbers (which Samuel did not buy) are said to be still in use as sills and sleepers in a house which is near the old site. Over two hundred and seventy years of service!

The following year, 1682, he also became possessed of four acres of orchard on the high land just back of Stratford, even then known by the name of Clapboard Hill. This orchard plot he decided to divide among his four children and in 1685 by formal deed gave to each one an acre. Therefore when Martha became the bride of David de Forest, she was already a landed proprietor.

David and Martha were probably married in 1696, when David was twenty-six and Martha twenty-four, but not by the Reverend Israel Chauncey, for the minister never performed the ceremony in those early days. A magistrate or a tavern keeper or a captain or any other man of sufficiently important standing in the community

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the latter was rated in the New York tax list of 1676 at £1,000, while David's father-in-law, we know, was living in Stratford very simply before 1681, and when he died in 1720 he left an estate of only £48.

could receive authority to marry a couple, but a minister could not do so; that is, not until the early part of the eighteenth century. Nor could Goodman Pickett pull the bell rope in their honor, although he was younger than his predecessor, old Goodman Peake, had been, and could have pulled it all the more lustily. No such thing was allowable then, for only the minister was ever married in the meeting-house. *Stratford*

But David and Martha were married, for all that, and in January, 1697, a little daughter was born to them. She was named Mary after Grandmother Blagge. Shortly after the birth of this little girl, David and his wife (possibly because of the new responsibilities which had come to them) "covenanted and were baptized" in the Stratford meeting-house, although David had already been baptized, as we know, in the old Dutch church in New York.

According to old traditions, David's first home was in a tiny house on the creek near the spot where he first landed, but after little Mary came to them in 1697 and little Sarah (who was named for Grandmother de Forest) in 1698, this house became inadequate and David looked about to see what he could do. It happened that there was then for sale in Stratford property which quite met David's requirements. A certain house lot, formerly owned by Isaac Nichols and later by Richard Bryan, who had then recently died, was offered for sale by the

Stratford latter's daughter. The property consisted of three fourths of an acre, situated at the intersection of Beardsley Avenue, Stratford Avenue, and Lundy's Lane, just opposite where the gate of the New Field was on Beardsley Avenue. It included "a certain Dwelling house and orchard," all of which David bought for £26.

The plot lay not far from Clapboard Hill, which was a convenient situation for David, as he already owned land there. Martha, as has been told, owned an acre of orchard on that hill before her marriage, and shortly afterward David bought from his father-in-law for a "valuable sum of money" another acre which had come into the latter's possession in some way. David was still hungry for land. He bought several tracts adjoining his own home, also part of a salt meadow, and several acres at Old Squaw's in the direction of Fairfield, so that he became a considerable landholder.

As for the house, that was apparently a magnificent mansion for those times. A graphic description of it has been handed down to us in Major De Forest's book. "It was a roomy wooden dwelling with two huge stone chimneys, a short entrance-hall in the centre abutting upon a cross stairway, and apartments of good size below and above, while two wings in the rear furnished space for cooking, washing, kindling-wood and other household stores. The windows were large and sheltered by inner shutters,

DOORWAY OF THE WOOSTER HOUSE

HOUSE ON THE HOUSATONIC RIVER ROAD, WHERE GENERAL DAVID WOOSTER WAS BORN IN 1710

SAID TO BE AN EXACT REPRODUCTION OF DAVID DE FOREST'S HOUSE

pierced in the lower story by a circle, in the second story by a heart. All the interior work was more or less carved; one authority says 'handsomely carved'; but perhaps mere panelling and moulding. It is worth adding that grandchildren of David De Forest put up dwellings on precisely this plan of architecture and ornament." It is also asserted that a large ball-room with deep window seats occupied one entire end of the second story.[1] *Stratford*

The house on Stratford Avenue was well furnished. It contained four-post bedsteads, each with a strong cord, which being laced back and forth on the frame took the place of a modern spring; also iron curtain rods, a feather bed, a bolster, two pillows, two homespun blankets, and a coverlet. To the best bed belonged in addition a set of blue curtains, valances, and a "blue rugge," probably one of the blue-and-white checkered bedspreads then largely used and much prized in New England.[2] We should much like to know something about the "Shagge" rug, valued in the inventory at the high

[1] David's old home was torn down long ago, but a house which is said to be an exact replica of it is still to be seen on the River Road about four miles north of Stratford. A recent photograph of this house is shown. It was built in 1706, and in it in 1710 General David Wooster of Revolutionary fame was born.

[2] These are still made in some of the Southern States and the quaint names of the old designs are still used — Log Cabin, Love in a Tangle, Chariot Wheels, Cat Track and Snail Trail, Young Men's Fancy, Queen's Victory, and many others.

Stratford price of £1.10. David possessed a brass warming-pan which was most useful; for even feather beds needed heating in those bitterly cold houses, where the sap froze in the fireplace as it oozed out of the log; there were "chests" in the rooms (probably "chests of drawers") and tables; on the walls hung pictures and large looking-glasses, as well as small ones, perhaps such as were then called "courting mirrors." There were, besides, cane chairs, black chairs, leather chairs, and some that were called just "chairs." [1]

It does not take long to enumerate the books in David's library, for they were few in number. Three Bibles — none too many for father, mother, and their ten children — a "Salm Boock," and a "Sarmond Boock." These were all, except two which were called in the inventory "Duch Bucks," probably relics of Father Isaack and brought by him when he came as a Dutch emigrant from Leyden to New Amsterdam in 1637. They are not called Dutch "Bibles" in the inventory, as has been erroneously stated in other records, but they may have been Bibles, for all that. In Scotland the Bible was often alluded to as "The Book," and the Dutch may have used the same word to designate it.

[1] One of these chairs, a rocking chair, is still in use and is owned by one of David's descendants who lives in Stratford not far from the site of the old home where it was used so many years ago.

CHAIR FORMERLY BELONGING TO DAVID DE FOREST

Owned by Miss Mary Alice Curtis, Stratford

There were a "quill wheel and swifts," [1] a "small wheel" for spinning flax, a "great wheel" for wool, and a loom and weaver's reeds for weaving woolen articles — rugs for the beds or tables and homespun cloth for winter clothing, as well as the homespun linen of which so much was needed for the household. *Stratford*

The supply of sheets of various kinds was plentiful: linen, holland (imported linen), cotton, and tow; holland "pillow-beers" (as pillow-cases were called); also table-cloths — a best damask one with napkins and others of homespun linen and of tow. At about this time pewter began to replace the wooden ware of earlier years, and a goodly array was on hand: a tankard, together with several basins, dishes, plates, porringers, and a baker (beaker), all of which many a collector would covet nowadays.

A chafing dish was presumably reserved for Martha's use. We should like to know what the old New England dames prepared in their chafing dishes! The every-day food was cooked in pots and kettles which hung from the crane in the great open fireplace in the kitchen or was baked in the big stone oven; and here in the kitchen were used, besides minor cooking utensils, the "great brass kittle," valued at £5.14.6, and the "great Iron Pot," £1.5.10.

[1] A "swift" was a revolving wheel upon which skeins of yarn or thread were placed for winding; "quills" were small pieces of reed on which thread was wound ready for weaving.

Stratford

What business enabled David to maintain this large house and his ever-increasing family? We must remember that his father Isaack had directed in his will that each of the children should be taught a trade, and David had chosen to become a glazier. He must certainly have had some other and more remunerative occupation; for although the families in Stratford numbered about two hundred when he came there to live (as against the original seventeen of sixty years before), even two hundred families could hardly enable a glazier to support the ten children who were born, in rather rapid succession, to David and Martha. It is evident that he was also a merchant and dealt in many articles besides glass; for we find records of his having for sale "colored linen, calico, damask, rum, molasses, silver buttons and calimanco" (a glossy woolen satin stuff, brocaded on one side only). Some of these articles he traded with Joseph Booth, the tanner, in exchange for shoes for his wife, "biggest girl," "least child," and "boy" (possibly David's son Samuel, in whom we shall be especially interested by and by). The price of men's shoes then varied from seven shillings "plain" to nine shillings "with heels and straps."

Besides his business David had farming matters to attend to. We know that he had a lot in the Common Field; for he had been obliged to supply one rod four feet and six inches of the common fence, and at

one time he had a number of cattle, as many as four cows and a calf, two two-year-olds, a yearling, several pigs, eight "small swine," and twenty-eight sheep. These were undoubtedly turned loose to fend for themselves in the forests of the Common Lands, which everyone used for this purpose, but David of course had first to "earmark his creatures." His registered mark was "a cross on ye top of each ear and a halfpeny on the fore side of the farr ear." He owned four horses and two colts — very necessary aids when one had to get about on horseback; there were saddles, too, and, to enable Martha to ride behind him, a pillion. *Stratford*

What did David look like? We wish we knew, and yet we can, with the data we have, reconstruct at least his costume with considerable accuracy. For workaday clothes he wore a coat and vest of "Duroy" (corduroy) with breeches of striped holland and long worsted stockings. On his head was his periwig — not his best one, worth ten shillings, but his old one, valued at only two shillings. Periwigs were made of Indian- or horse-hair, and it was an expensive matter to keep them in order; for they were often quite imposing, with long curls which fell on the shoulders. David kept a supply of wig hair on hand for necessary repairs.

On Sundays or when he was entertaining his friends in his grand ball-room or when his daughters were married, David's appearance was undoubtedly

Stratford very impressive. He then wore his best periwig; his coat, vest, and breeches of "French Drugit"; a long muslin neckcloth wound round his neck; shoes with buckles; at his side a small sword, and on his finger a gold ring. Then if perchance he stood up and played upon his violin for the amusement of the company, he must indeed have done honor to his fine house.

Allusion is made above to the weddings of David's daughters. Two such joyful events took place while he was still with them. Sarah, the second daughter, was married on December 24, 1719, to Benjamin Lewis, Jr., son of a Benjamin Lewis who had come to Stratford when the town was young; and Mary, David's eldest child, on July 21, 1720, became the wife of Stephen Hawley, grandson of Joseph Hawley, also one of the earliest settlers.

But these years were not altogether years of happiness; for in January, 1720, within a month after Sarah's marriage, Martha had lost her father, Samuel Blagge. He was then an old man and had long been cared for by his two sons. His estate was small. The inventory enumerating the various items which comprised it ends thus: "Now for a loving issue respecting said estate." As much of it was due to his sons for his maintenance and the payment of his debts, even the loving issue brought Martha as her share but fifty shillings.

But a heavier loss than the death of her father was in store for Martha. In the spring of the next year

STRATFORD ELMS AS THEY ARE TODAY

David was called upon to leave his wife and his many children. He was not an old man, only fifty-two years of age. That he had become a man of some consequence in the community is attested to, among other things, by the record in the Land Papers, which reads: "Mr. David De Forest departed this life April 20th, 1721." This prefix of "Mr." had a real significance in those days, designating a man of some importance, while "Esquire" indicated an even higher social position. *Stratford*

The ten children were all living at the time of David's death; and while several were grown up and some married, the youngest, little Benjamin — possibly so named because, like the Benjamin of old, he was the darling of his father's heart — was but five years old.

As David left no will, the estate was settled by the Court, which appointed "Mrs. Martha Defrees widow relict of the said deceased,"[1] administratrix, and directed her to make an inventory of his belongings. A large part of David's estate consisted of land. The homestead and the house with its "handsome carvings" were valued at only £70, a commentary on the scarcity of money in the early days of the colony. Other tracts of land were "Four acres lying at the Field Gate, £80."; "Three acres lying at a place called Old Squaws, £30."; "Three acres of Salt Meadow, £12."; and last, but not least, "One

[1] Probate Records of Stratford (at Fairfield, Conn.).

Stratford acre of orchard at Clapboard Hill, £14." This was the orchard that Samuel Blagge had sold to David shortly after his marriage. In the way of money there were but two items: £1.16.4 cash and £6.16.8 paper money.

Exclusive of the "setting out" already given by David to his two daughters, which constituted their portions, the clear estate amounted to about £300, no mean sum in those days.[1] The Court appointed Edmund Lewis and Robert Walker distributors, and they awarded to Martha "one third part of the movable estate to be her own forever and one third part of the housing and lands during her naturall life."[1] The eldest son, David, was given, as was usual, a double portion, and the remaining children were to share alike.

Martha did not remain long unmarried: nobody did in those days; as soon as a woman became a widow, she was wooed by all the eligible bachelors and widowers. It is not astonishing, therefore, that Martha, notwithstanding her forty-four years and her ten children (five of them under fifteen years of age) should have accepted another husband, although this followed somewhat abruptly even for that practical period of our history. Seven months after David's death and before his estate was even settled, the vital statistics record that "Mr. John Thompson & mis^{s} Martha Deforest wid. was Joyned in mariage

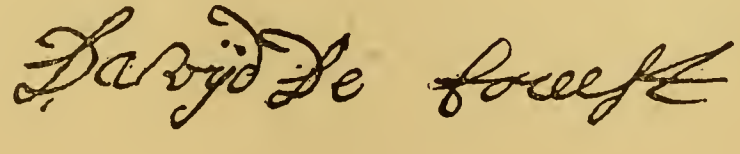
[1] Probate Records of Stratford (at Fairfield, Conn.).

Nov[r] 30, 1721." Lest Martha in her new happiness should be remiss in her duty to her children, her new husband, John Thompson, was obliged to "acknowledge himself bound in a Recognizance of £300 that sd. Martha shall faithfully discharge her Guardianship according to the Law." *Stratford*

All of David's children did well in the world and when they died left larger estates than that of their father. They all established themselves in Connecticut, chiefly in the neighborhood of Stratford, several of them travelling back through the wilderness and making homes for themselves in the new hill towns as they were organized.[1]

The members of the Walloon family had now settled down in the land of their adoption, devout, earnest, industrious men and women, living contentedly on the products of their labor. As simple New England farmer folk, they surely led a much more peaceful and happy life than had their forbears in the little walled city of Avesnes during the strenuous days of war and religious persecution which had finally driven them forth to seek a home in the New World. Was this the kind of life of which Jesse de Forest had dreamed?

[1] For an account of David's six sons and four daughters see Appendix, p. 290.



VI

SAMUEL DE FOREST

Stratford

SAMUEL DE FOREST, David's second son, was born on April 4, 1704. His parents much desired to have him baptized immediately, as every new-born baby in any well-organized ecclesiastical society should be; but how was this to be done when there was no regular pastor at Stratford between the years 1703 and 1709? The babies had to be "saved up," as it were, until a visiting pastor should appear. On July 23, 1704, the Rev. Charles Chauncey, son of the old Stratford parson, came over from his parish at Stratfield, and a very grand baptism took place, fourteen babies receiving their names on that day.

Samuel was seventeen when his father died in 1721; two years later, on March 8, 1723, he "owned the covenant," as was expected from all well-brought-up boys. We know further that in his early days he fell in love with little Abigail, the young daughter of Samuel Peat, who lived by the "water side" in Stratford.

The Peats were among the earliest settlers in Stratford and the history of their much-divided property concerns our story. Moses Wheeler, the original Stratford ferryman, of whom we have al-

ready heard, from the time of his coming to Stratford owned one of the choicest sites there. It was on the shore of the Housatonic where the land projected somewhat into the river, giving a most lovely view across the water to the south. This, his home lot, with three acres of land and his house, he had sold at an early date to a certain Richard Butler. The latter had two daughters, the younger of whom, Phebe Butler, married Benjamin Peat. On May 15, 1674, Richard Butler gave to his son-in-law, Benjamin Peat, the northern half of his home lot (that is, one and one half acres[1]), for which Benjamin agreed in return to pay to Richard Butler twenty shillings a year during the latter's lifetime. *Stratford*

Benjamin Peat on February 9, 1702, again subdivided the lot, giving to his son Samuel (1670–1748), usually called "Jr.", the northern half of it, which contained about three quarters of an acre and included Moses Wheeler's original dwelling-house. In May, 1704, Benjamin Peat was gathered to his fathers, and his son Samuel continued for many years to occupy the house lot which his father had given him, but he evidently did not occupy it peaceably. There was dissension between members of the family, apparently about a well which was on the

[1] Bounded "North with ye Street; East with ye Street; South with ye land of Richard Butler; West with land of John Peak Junr, &c." This term "&c." represents a pond to the west of the property, for many years known as Peat's Pond, but now called Selby's.

Stratford property; and at last in May, 1725, Phebe, Samuel's mother, "to prevent future trouble," gave him a deed "to ratify and confirm" his father's gift.

The reason why Samuel Peat wanted the gift ratified is not far to seek. He had an only child, Abigail, then eighteen years old, who was about to wed Samuel de Forest. Abigail's father wished to divide his lot and give to his daughter and her husband one half of his three-quarter acre, with an absolutely clear title. Young de Forest's portion of his father's estate, which had just been distributed, was a plot seven rods wide, on the west side of the "Gate Lot," so that the young man already had land enough whereon to build a home for his bride; but Samuel Peat had set his heart on having his daughter live with him. The wedding took place December 30, 1725, and thereafter the young people made their home with Abigail's father, who "for love and good will to my son-in-law Sam[ll] Deforest and Abigail his wife," gave them on March 17, 1726, half of his already small lot. There they all lived together, the place being alluded to henceforth as the "house lot land of Samuel Peat and Samuel Deforest." Here four of Abigail's children were born — Martha, 1726; Mary, 1729; Joseph, 1731; and Hepzibah, 1734.

Samuel de Forest seems to have wished to reassemble the different plots which were originally included in the three acres acquired by Richard

Butler. In 1728 he bought for £30 the other half of Benjamin Peat's lot from the widow, Phebe, and in 1732 purchased for £95 the remaining one and one-half acres which had gone to Richard Butler's eldest daughter; by these transactions Moses Wheeler's "home lot" was once more intact as it had left his hands. *Stratford*

Samuel did not, however, long own the old Wheeler property; for in 1732 he began to sell his land in Stratford and to buy in the hill country, a region which now becomes of interest in our narrative.

When the young couple were married in 1725, there was already in existence in the northern part of Stratford township an "Ecclesiastical Society" or parish known as Ripton. Ripton Parish then included much of that part of Stratford township which lay beyond the "Six Mile Limit"; that is, over six miles north from the old meeting-house, in the territory then called the Common Lands.[1] The story of the founding of Ripton Society, of which Samuel and Abigail were to become faithful *Ripton*

[1] These Common Lands were owned by "Ye Proprietors of Common undivided Land in Stratford," who had several times sought to have them divided. Finally, in 1732–33 such a division was ordered, but it was not until the last Monday of November, 1738, that "Ye draught of ye Lots" was finally made by Edmund Lewis, Esq., and each of the one hundred and ninety-nine claimants, of whom Samuel was one, received the grant of a portion. In many cases the actual plot was not assigned until years later.

Ripton members, is both interesting in itself and typical of the founding of many similar societies.

Permission to organize a new ecclesiastical society could be obtained only through an appeal to the General Assembly (of which we heard a great deal in the previous chapter). Indeed, a saw-mill could scarcely be erected, much less a new parish founded, without the sanction of this dominating body. The necessity of thus appealing to the General Assembly, irksome as it undoubtedly was in church matters, had the advantage of preventing the weakening of existing churches by too frequent subdivision.

When, therefore, in April, 1717, the settlers of the region to the north, few in number as they were and sparsely scattered through the hill country, longed for a church and religious advantages of their own, they sent a petition, signed by three of them, to the "Honrble. Govrr and Representatives of his Majesties Coliny of Conetecut." In this they stated that many of the inhabitants of the northern part of the township lived eight or ten miles from Stratford and could not therefore "sanctifie the Sabbath" as they should, adding with some logic, "Considering that faith comes by hearing the word preached, how can wee hear without a preacher?" They therefore asked that they might "have a minister among themselves at their own charges." This privilege was granted that same year, and the ecclesiastical society of Ripton was established, though it must be

understood that this parish was still in Stratford township and subject to it in many ways. *Ripton*

The next difficulty of the hill settlers was to secure a pastor. His joining them would veritably be "The Church's flight into the wilderness" (to borrow the text on which a neighboring clergyman preached a sermon). Some special inducements, the new society thought, must therefore be offered. Accordingly, the proprietors of the Common Lands of Stratford, who were interested in the founding of the new society, as many of the settlers were their children, by a "Town Act" set aside one hundred acres of land in the new parish to belong to the minister who should settle there and "continue with them in said work to his death, then said lands to be his own forever"!

Yet the difficulties were not over; for it was comparatively easy then to give away unimproved land but very hard to collect from the scattered parishioners the church tax wherewith to pay the minister's salary, though this yearly tax was often only "2 shillings 6 pence a head." Even this sum was usually paid in produce, and if the minister wished it in paper money, he sometimes had to be satisfied with two thirds of the amount.

The first meeting-house in Ripton stood about a quarter of a mile northeast of the present one. There, on February 12, 1724, with ninety-two members from the old congregation of Stratford, the new church was organized. On the same day the Rev.

Ripton Jedediah Mills, then twenty-seven years old, was ordained pastor. He was from Windsor, Connecticut, a Yale graduate of 1722. He was promised "eighty pounds towards building his house, forty pounds of it in money and forty pounds of it in work, and in the beginning fifty pounds salary a year, and afterwards rising as God shall enable us and as Mr. Mills shall stand in need, and as this society shall think fit."

Mr. Mills was an earnest worker, seeking to "promote the awakening and salvation of souls." He was the friend and disciple of some of the eminent preachers of the day — Whitefield and Tenant, Bellamy and Edwards. It was said of him that he was "not noisy" in his preaching but "grave, sentimental, searching and pungent." Thus he lived among his people, loving and beloved, for fifty-two years.

Moose Hill The church in Ripton was new, however, and the minister still young when in 1732, Samuel bought twenty-six acres in Ripton Parish, on Moose Hill in the "back woods," and decided to make his home there with his young wife and little children. He was undoubtedly attracted to that region because his father's old friend, Deacon Edmund Lewis, had already purchased land there. Deacon Edmund had been, in fact, "dismissed to Ripton Parish" as early as 1722, some twelve years before Samuel and Abigail moved from Stratford, and he had already

become prominent in all its parish affairs. It was Deacon Edmund's brother, Benjamin Lewis, Jr., who had married Samuel's sister Sarah. The tract that Samuel now bought adjoined the Lewis tract on the east.[1] *Moose Hill*

Moose Hill, about four miles northwest from Ripton Centre and fully twelve miles from Stratford, was one of the "handsome and elegant hills" described by the Rev. Timothy Dwight during his early travels in New England; it had received its name, so it was said, because the earliest settlers had killed a large moose there. Only Indian trails then led to Moose Hill, and Samuel's near neighbors would be the Pootatuck Indians, who fortunately were friendly to the whites. But what a prospect for Abigail and her babies!

No records tell of Samuel's journey to the place where the new home was to be or of the building of his house, but his experience was like that of many another, and we can well imagine it. He must have started from the old home in Stratford on horseback, since no highway as yet led to Moose Hill, and he was perhaps accompanied by some of his brothers, who were to help him. The little party no doubt journeyed up by the banks of the lovely Housatonic

[1] These twenty-six acres were described as "butting and bounding easterly by Common Land, northerly by John Moss his land — south by John Johnson and Joseph Johnson, west by Mr. Lewis his land."

Moose Hill River until they came to the foot-hills and then turned in a northwesterly direction, mounting continually till they came to Ripton, which was much higher than Stratford but not nearly so high as they still had to go. So far their way led over a primitive road, but beyond Ripton they probably travelled by Indian trails only. One of the roads, which still runs from Ripton to the hilltop (now called Monroe), passes by the site of Samuel's house and was originally, perhaps, one of these trails. We know that one of Samuel's neighbors, who had built a house the previous year among these same hills, also went by an Indian trail, as no road had then been built although one had been surveyed on the east side of Barn Hill.

Samuel's destination was the "lower end of Moose Hill" — a hill crest or ridge some six hundred feet above tide-water. Did he have a distant view of Long Island Sound? It was hardly possible because of the forest that lay before him, and at that moment he was probably indifferent to anything of so little consequence as a mere view. The discovery of a good spring and the choice of a proper site for his house were items of much more importance.

Perhaps he summoned help from Ripton or from Stratford to aid him in clearing the land where the house was to stand and in digging the cellar, as well as in the raising of the great frame. Probably the house was small like those of his nearest neighbors,

but its beams were undoubtedly mighty enough to stand, as did those of other houses, for over two hundred years. Great oak trees were trimmed and dressed where they fell and hewn with an axe into timbers ten and twelve inches square. Heavy sills were laid upon stone foundations and at each corner posts almost as heavy as the sills were set upright upon them. These upright framing timbers were two stories high and midway of their height there were notched into them horizontal timbers called "girths" which carried the second-story floor beams. On top of the uprights a third set of horizontal timbers, the "plates," supported the weight of the roof. This skeleton was "pinned" together with round pegs made of oak about an inch in diameter and five or six inches in length. When the frame stood complete with its huge beams, there must have been rejoicing among those whose weary arms and backs had helped to raise it. *Moose Hill*

The house was probably what was called a "plank house" and therefore no studs were needed, but planks two inches thick had to be made with which to cover the frame. Fortunately a new saw-mill had recently been put up at Halfway River, not very far off, and there the planks were sawed for walls and floors. The wall planks, made of oak with square edges, were placed on end side by side outside of both sill and corner posts; the lower planks for the first story reached from sill to girth and were

Moose Hill pegged to both of these. The upper-story planks stood on top of the lower row and were similarly pegged to girth and plate. The floors, of chestnut or perhaps of pine, were also made of two-inch planks laid close together, with a half-inch strip under the joints to make them tight. All these planks were either "pinned" on or nailed with hand-made nails — probably the former, as a plank house built by one of Samuel's daughters about twenty-three years later was entirely put together with pegs, even the window frames being so joined.

The walls and roof were covered with cedar shingles three feet long. These were riven by hand and shaved down at one end with a drawing knife, then nailed to the planks so as to show twelve inches "to the weather." The large, irregular heads of the hand-made nails are still to be seen on ancient buildings, two on the weathered end of each shingle.

The huge chimney was built of stones, of which a plenty was always to be found in Connecticut. This chimney was the centre and heart of the new home. It was perhaps as much as twelve feet square at the base, and as it rose to each new level, hearths opened whereon bright flames would flicker to warm and cheer. Even the cellar had its big fireplace, where the rough work of the household could be done.

The stones of these colonial houses were often put together with clay instead of mortar and the same material was sometimes used for plastering the

rooms. In fact, it was so used in the house of Samuel's daughter already alluded to. The clay was difficult to spread, but once in place and dry it was almost impossible to break. If lime was used instead of clay, it was made from shells gathered down at the water-side and brought up in sacks on the backs of horses. *Moose Hill*

The heavy corner posts within the rooms were never covered with plaster, but the wall spaces between had to be lathed before the plaster could be applied. The laths, hand-made, were of thin boards riven and split in an irregular way so that the strips still held together, though somewhat spread apart. These were nailed directly on the planks, and then the house was ready for plastering. No paint was put on the outside of the house and probably none on the inside either, and there were no adornments — not even a porch — just two stone steps by which to get up to the front door.

It was, as we have said, undoubtedly a small house, as were most of the early houses in that region. It probably contained a room on the first floor with a great fireplace and stone oven, used as a living-room and kitchen, out of which one or two pantries opened. In front of this was a "best room," which could be used as parlor or guest room, or both, as was often the case, and there was probably another bedroom, while in the half-story above were a couple more rooms. Not very ample quarters for

Moose Hill Samuel's large family; but if the bedrooms were not too small, two double beds could be put in each one, or trundle beds in which the children could sleep might stand under the high-posters and be pulled out at night.

We do not know when Samuel actually moved to Moose Hill, but it was probably in the summer of 1734. The following data give us all the clues we have.

He had bought his twenty-six acres on July 1, 1732, and he soon began to increase his holdings of land in that region by buying small plots from his neighbors, as well as by securing the rights of other people, including those of his brother David, to "division lands yet to be taken up," which meant that the lands were to be divided but were not as yet definitely assigned. In the "town distribution of 1732," three acres and sixty rods that adjoined his own property were allotted to him. These, however, because of the "Ruffness of Land" were "sized by ye Distributors at 2 acres and no more to be Deemed." Several other plots came to him by distribution or purchase until he became a large landholder in those parts.

Moreover, as soon as Samuel had decided to move to Moose Hill, he began to sell his Stratford property; on October 6, 1732, he disposed of his share of his father's estate; that is, his part of the "Gate Lot" opposite to his father's old homestead.

Moose Hill

A still more important indication of the probable year in which Samuel removed from "the water side" is the following fact: on February 4, 1734, he and his father-in-law, Samuel Peat, Jr., sold for £240 their "1½ acres House lot Land, with a Dwelling House, Barn and Well thereon," which was the old Benjamin Peat homestead in which he and Abigail had spent the first nine years of their married life with Abigail's father.

We have already seen that no highway led to Moose Hill when Samuel took the journey there to build his house. By February, 1734, however, a "cross highway" had been laid out which began at "a heap of stones near to ye North East corner of Sam[ll]. Deforest his barn," and ran until it reached another pile of stones at the "Grand highway on Fools Hatch." This shows that Samuel's barn and presumably his house were already built by February of 1734. On the other hand, he and his family could not have moved to Moose Hill as early as that date, for his fourth child, Hepzibah, was born in Stratford in 1734 and was baptized there on June 2nd of the same year. Thus it seems likely that Samuel moved with his family that summer after the house and barn were ready and when Hepzibah was a tiny baby. In any case, he was fully established in Ripton Parish in 1735 and held church office there in December of that year.

We do not know just how Abigail and the chil-

Moose Hill dren and "Grandmother Harvey" (Abigail's mother's mother, who always lived with Samuel and Abigail) reached their new home. Probably Abigail with baby Hepzibah on her arm made the rough journey on horseback, mounted on a pillion behind her husband. The little three-year-old Joseph may have sat on a small pillow in front of his father. Grandmother Harvey and the other two children possibly followed under some one else's escort. In any event, when Abigail reached Moose Hill a wonderful new home met her eyes — a house all her own, even if it was in the wilderness!

Although the house was finished, much remained for the pioneers to do. A well must be dug, fields must be cleared, and a place for an orchard prepared as well as a garden spot for Abigail. Then ploughing must follow and that wearisome gathering of stones which cleared the fields for future sowing and provided the picturesque stone walls that served as boundaries throughout Connecticut.

Who was to do all this work, to which Samuel's one pair of hands was quite unequal? Perhaps he had slaves or it may be that some of his neighbors on Barn Hill or in Ripton helped him. There were the Indians, too, but they were a lazy lot; hunting they were always ready for, but hard work was quite another thing. They were friendly enough but very startling with their sudden comings and goings. They never knocked, just appeared; never

said goodbye, just left. A very undependable kind of help they were but better than none. *Moose Hill*

One of the very first duties after settling in the house, or perhaps even before that, was to go to meeting. Mr. Mills had now been installed in Ripton Parish ten years and a blessing it was to be under his ministry. For all that, the ride from Moose Hill to Ripton meeting-house was long, about four miles, though the number of miles could make no difference to the parishioners, since go they must. Again Samuel and Abigail must have depended upon their trusty horse, with Samuel carrying the family dinner in his saddle-bags. Perhaps two of the older children were seated astride of another nag. Grandmother Harvey may have stayed at home to care for the baby, though few children were counted too young to take on such a journey, even when they were so little that they had to be laid in the kind of cage or basket kept in the meeting-house for this purpose.

Such a journey was not unpleasant if the weather was good; there was always the possibility of meeting friends or neighbors and chatting as they jogged on together; there was so little time for visiting that early settlers eagerly seized this chance for sociability. At last they would arrive at Ripton Centre, veritably a "centre"; for families on horseback or on foot, if they came from near-by, could be seen gathering from every direction and emerging on the

Moose Hill Green. This was long and narrow, the meeting-house standing at one end and the stocks and whipping post close at hand.[1]

Dismounting at the "Sabba'day House," a large building in the rear of the meeting-house, the worshippers would, in winter, crowd around the brisk fire to get warm after their cold ride. When Samuel and Abigail first attended church in Ripton Parish, the meeting-house was a barrack-like building and bitter cold in winter. There was no fire whatever; even foot-stoves had not yet come into use. No wonder if the women in spite of their brief warming by the fire in the Sabba'day House drew their quilted hoods closer when they crossed the threshold of the sanctuary or if the children pulled up their mittens and mufflers. No wonder, either, if the boys stamped their feet or slapped them together even before the minister came to "Finally" or to "A few more words and I have done." Nor could the sermons themselves have exerted other than a chilling influence if we may judge from the titles of those preached by the Rev. Mr. Mills, for instance: "An Inquiry concerning the state of the unregenerate under the Gospel. Whether on every rising degree of internal light conviction and amendment of life they are

[1] As early as 1740 an Episcopal church was also erected farther down on the Green with the burying-ground beyond, where "church people were buried near the church, meeting-house folk farther away, and slaves against the fence."

(while unregenerate) undoubtedly on the whole more vile odious and abominable (in God's sight) than they would have been had they continued secure and at ease going on in their sins under the same external means of light." *Moose Hill*

The congregation sang from that literary curiosity, the old "Bay Psalm Book," and let us hope that even the mild exertion of singing set the blood circulating a little. Singing was started by the chorister, who used a wooden pitch-pipe, and the hymn was always given out in couplets.

When the long service was over, the congregation would repair once more to the Sabba'day House to spend the interval between the services. Here around the roaring fire friends or families separated by distance could have pleasant reunions, so that the "noon hour" was always thoroughly enjoyed. Abundant providers were those early colonists and the good things the dinner baskets contained were enough to make the eyes of the children glisten. Cold pie, doughnuts, pork and beans, and perhaps brown bread and cheese! Milk also was probably carried in a wooden bottle — a "pottle," as it was called; a real Sabbath Day feast.

Many were undoubtedly sorry when this delightful respite was over and they were obliged to leave the bright fire and return for the second long service; for even if the theology of the day was "red hot," it was not the kind of heat that kept the con-

Moose Hill gregation warm. In summer when the church windows could be open and the pleasant breezes float in, the experience was not so severe. Then the nooning was taken in the open air under the shade of a great oak which stood near at hand, and the children could wander in the graveyard and work off some of their superfluous energy.

Only a few years after Samuel came to Ripton a remarkable religious revival took place throughout New England — "The Great Awakening," as it has been called. Jonathan Edwards at Northampton, Massachusetts, had aroused a widespread interest in spiritual matters. Hezekiah Gold, also, who was then the minister at Stratford, had had during the early days of his ministry an unusually successful revival in his congregation. He had heard great things of George Whitefield, an English evangelist and a celebrated pulpit orator, and was anxious that he should preach in Stratford as a means of increasing the religious interest.

Mr. Whitefield, the founder of Calvinistic Methodism, had promised to come to New England and did indeed arrive in 1740, starting forthwith on a crusade in the colony of Connecticut, where he had "wonderful success in awaking secure sinners." In October, 1740, during the course of Mr. Whitefield's progress through Connecticut, he preached in Hartford, Wethersfield, and Middletown on his way to New Haven. Fortunately a very vivid descrip-

tion of the interest and excitement caused in this region by his preaching has been preserved. Nathan Cole of Kensington Parish has left a manuscript concerning his "Spiritual Travels," in which he gives a thrilling account of his strenuous efforts to attend Whitefield's preaching on October 23rd. He writes: *Moose Hill*

One morning all on a suding about 8 or 9 o'clock there came a messenger and said Mr. Whitfeld preached at Hartford and Wethersfeld yesterday and is to preach at Middletown this morning at 10 o'clock. i was in my field at work and I dropt my tool that I had in my hand and run home and run throu my house and bad my wife get ready quick to goo and hear Mr. Whitfeld preach at Middletown and run to my pasture for my hors with all my might fearing I should be too late to hear him and I brought my hors home and soon mounted and took my wife up and went forward as fast as I thought ye hors could bear and when my hors began to be out of breth I would get down and put my wife on ye saddel and bid her ride as fast as she could and not Stop or Slack for me except I bad her and so I would run until I was almost out of breth and then mount my hors again and so I did several times to favor my hors . . . to get along as if we was fleeing for our lives and all this while fearing we should be too late to hear ye Sarmon for we had 12 miles to ride dubble in a littel more then an hour and we went around by the housen parish and when we came within about half a mile of ye road that come down from Hartford and Wethersfeld and Stepney to Middletown I saw before me a Cloud or fog rising and I first thought off from the great river but as I came nearer ye road I heard a noise

Moose Hill something like a low rumbling thunder and I presently found it was ye rumbling of horses feet coming down ye road and this cloud was a cloud of dust made by ye running of ye horses feet. It rose some rods into ye air over the tops of ye hills and trees and when I came within about 20 rods of ye road I could see men and horses Sliping along in ye cloud like shadows and when I came nearer it was like a stedy streem of horses and their riders. Scarcely a horse more then his length behind another and all of a lather and fome with swet and ther breth rooling out of their noistrels in ye cloud of dust every jump every hors seemed to go with all his might to carry his rider to hear ye news from heaven for ye saving of their Souls . . . I found a vacance between two horses to Slip in my hors . . . they was so covered with dust that thay looked allmost all of a coler coats & hats & shirts & horses . . . I heard no man speak a word all ye way three mile . . .

When I saw Mr. Whitfeld come up upon ye scaffil he looked allmost angellical a young small slender youth before some thousands of people.

On October 23rd and the three succeeding days Whitefield held services in New Haven, and as Mr. Mills was anxious to hear him speak, he went thither for the purpose. Probably Hezekiah Gold of Stratford went also. Whitefield was much attracted by Jedediah Mills, declaring that he was "refreshed" by the sight of him, and writing in his journal: "My soul was much united to him. I could not but think God would do great things by his hands. He talked like one that was no novice in divine things."

Monday morning, October 27th, at Milford, four miles from Stratford, beyond the Housatonic River, Whitefield held a service of which he wrote: "Preached this morning I think with as much Clearness and Freedom and Power as I have for a long Season. The Presence of God was much in the Assembly, which was large. . . . Dear Mr. Mills, who came again to meet me this Morning, was much affected." *Moose Hill*

In the afternoon he preached at Stratford, where so large a congregation assembled that, according to tradition, the service took place in the open air. As a matter of fact, Whitefield's custom was to preach in the open air, as churches were not generally large enough to hold his congregations. This could hardly have been pleasant on that particular day; for Mr. Whitefield tells us, "The weather was very cold, it having snowed a great Part of the afternoon." Nevertheless, all the country-side was there and we may be sure that Samuel and Abigail were among the number.

Whitefield's voice undoubtedly had an unusual carrying quality; for a woman who lived nearly a mile from "Meeting House Hill" distinctly heard the text, from Zechariah, "Turn ye to the stronghold, ye prisoners of hope," and repeated it to her husband on his return from the preaching.

The interest was intense and many were the conversions. One young woman "in the overwhelming

Moose Hill excitement of her mind, swooned and fell into a sort of trance, which lasted one or two days." Another, a young mother, was so much affected that she walked all the way to Fairfield with her infant in her arms to hear him preach again that day. In speaking later of the services held at Milford and Stratford the preacher said: "Both these Places, especially Stratford, were ill reported of for their leaning toward Arminian Principals. Oh Lord, convince them of the Rottenness of their Foundation." Mr. Whitefield was entertained by Mr. Gold during his short stay in the town and then passed on to Fairfield. The excitement in Stratford and the surrounding country was very great after his visit.

How we wish we could know what effect was produced upon Samuel and Abigail and Grandmother Harvey by this "Great Awakening"! We can imagine them wending their way back to their hilltop, discussing the sermon as they went. After the long ride through the cold and the snow, how rejoiced they must have been to reach home again, where, gathered around the hospitable fireplace with its great back log, we may be sure they talked over at length the exciting events of the day.

Soon after his arrival at Moose Hill Samuel became active in Ripton Parish affairs. In December, 1735, it was agreed that "ye minister's rates" should be, yearly, "six pence on ye pound on ye common list" (the tax list), and Samuel was chosen

collector. In 1738 he with four others was appointed on the "Committee of Ripton Parish" (the local governing body) and they were instructed, among other things, to affix "warnings" of society meetings to "ye sign posts" in five different parts of the parish, one of these sign posts being at Moose Hill near Samuel's house. This position on the parish committee he held for seven years or longer. *Moose Hill*

The year 1739 found him on a committee of five for the care of "the School for AcQuamQuag Quarter." "Acquunkquoke" was the Indian name for the Ripton region and meant "high land." Schoolhouses were at this time usually built upon the highway to avoid the payment of taxes, and fifty families were necessary to entitle a community to a school; but to find in this sparsely settled region fifty families whose boys and girls could attend the school meant that many of them must come from long distances. For fifteen years Samuel continued on the school committee, and it is worthy of note that in 1745 one of the schools was alluded to as "the school at Mooshill."

Religion and education were undoubtedly the dominant interests of the early New Englanders, but a third element in the routine of their lives was the military training, in which nearly all the men took part. The military organizations of Connecticut had already attained in Samuel's day to an ancient and honorable history. We recall that as

Moose Hill early as 1639 "Sergeant Nichols" of Stratford was "assigned . . . to train the men and exercise them in military discipline," but at about the time of King Philip's War (1675) the militia of the colony was put on a more orderly footing and there were "train bands" in many of the larger settlements. Of course Stratford, which had become one of the most important towns in Connecticut, had to have such an organization as well as her neighbors, and at the time of this war was ordered to raise thirty-three "dragoons," Fairfield, the county town, being required to provide no more than thirty-eight. Whenever a new ecclesiastical society was fully established, it was expected that it would organize its own train band, and accordingly Ripton followed the example set by the larger towns. Our friend Samuel in 1740 became a military officer and began to be spoken of as "Sergeant Samuel Deforest," and as "Clerk of the train band." Edmund Lewis, Jr. (a son of Deacon Edmund and a man of about Samuel's age), was also made ensign, then captain, and finally colonel.

But military duties, after all, occupied only a small part of Samuel's time and he was chiefly active on the various church committees. The little old meeting-house, built in 1720, was in 1745 quite inadequate for the needs of the growing congregation; and as a community could not even build a meeting-house without permission, our colonists petitioned

the General Assembly to appoint a committee to come to Ripton and look into the matter. Samuel and nine others were accordingly directed to meet the committee and to "lead them sutably for vewing the place and surcumstances of the parish of Ripton with reference to building a new meeting house in Ripton." The result was evidently not favorable to the petitioners, for the new church was not built that year or for many years more, in fact, not until 1785–86. About the time the new church was first proposed, a committee was also appointed "to affix . . . a place for the Convenient and Decent Burying of the Dead," and among the names on this committee we find that of Samuel. *Moose Hill*

Many and long were the discussions entailed by all these affairs — discussions which often took place, it is likely, around the fire in Samuel's cozy living-room, Abigail the while sewing or twirling her flax wheel and putting in her word now and then; for although women did not read much in those days, partly because they had so few books, they nevertheless felt a keen interest in all that was going on.

When Abigail had been living nine years on Moose Hill, Nehemiah, her seventh child, was born. Seven were none too many for Abigail's loving heart but a large number to be provided for. Fortunately some of the older children were then able to help her with the daily work. Martha, the eldest one, was seventeen years old; Mary was fifteen,

Moose Hill Joseph twelve, Hepzibah nine, Elizabeth six, and Samuel four years old. Grandmother Harvey, too, was still living with Abigail and, even though she was getting pretty old, was able to help with the care of the children. Little Hepzibah was an especial pet of hers, and we know that it was Grandmother who taught the child to read and write; for the schoolhouse at Moose Hill was not yet built when Hepzibah was learning her A B C's out of the New England Primer. The dear grandmother also taught her many hymns, and little Hepzibah, who had a good memory, could recite her beloved hymns on Sunday evenings as long as the family cared to listen.

The father was obliged to provide both food and clothing for all these youngsters, and it all had to come in one way or another from his farm. Samuel had very likely by this time added a weaving-room to his house, and so the weaver would come to convert into cloth or linen the products of the wool and flax wheels of Abigail and her daughters. After that, a tailor would fashion these homespun products into the every-day clothes which they all wore, and we can easily imagine a similarity in the general appearance of the whole family. When it became necessary to fit the family out with shoes, Samuel would send for the cobbler, who took the heavy, home-tanned leather and converted it into shoes for the elders, the children, and the slaves — if any

there were. Of course, each of these craftsmen, while thus occupied, had to live in the house. *Moose Hill*

The New England "planters" received little or no income from their land, only produce, and so they had a system of exchange among themselves. David the glazier, of Stratford, for instance, made window sashes for Joseph Booth, the tanner, and he in turn tanned leather and made shoes for David's family. Samuel, the farmer, took hay or apples to Captain Josiah Curtiss at his saw-mill on the Halfway River and Josiah sawed Samuel's timber for him, or Samuel took his grain to the miller at the grist-mill, a little farther down the river, and the miller retained a certain percentage of the grain in payment for his services. Even the minister once received "9 pounds of Solluther" (sole leather) in lieu of his church rates.

Once in a while accounts were balanced, the record often beginning, "Reckened & Seteled all Book accounts from the Beginning of the World to this Day — Even." The balance, on whichever side it might be, was sometimes carried forward; for it was not often that actual money changed hands. This generally happened only when surplus material could be sold in one of the larger towns or sent for export to "The Landing" on the Housatonic, which was Ripton's seaport. It was from there frequently shipped to the West Indies, and from these sales only was it usual to receive "hard cash."

Moose Hill

This cash was sometimes put out at interest — "money in bond" being an item which is often found in the old inventories — or else it was used as soon as possible for the purchase of more land. It may have been through sales of this kind that Samuel obtained the money which he invested in real estate. In the old Land Records are many entries which show how widely scattered were his holdings. There were several tracts on Moose Hill, some at Foolshatch, at Cub Swamp near Tim's Pools, at Cherry Tree Plain, and at many other places, including some as far away as Fairfield.

As years went on, changes came; the year 1748 was a sad one for Samuel's wife. A little David had been born on July 9, 1745, and now in 1748, her ninth and last child, Josiah, came to gladden her heart but he lived only six months. In April of the same year her father, Samuel Peat, having now rounded out a life of eighty-four years, also passed away. He held large landed interests when he died and was a wealthy man according to the standards of the day. Abigail as his only child came into possession of various tracts of more or less valuable real estate.

Additional wealth was no doubt very acceptable to the parents at this time, when the elder children were beginning to think of matrimony and of building homes of their own. We must pause here in our story of Samuel's life to tell something about the marriages of these children.

In 1750, Mary, the second daughter, was married to Elisha, son of the Rev. Mr. Mills. This was undoubtedly a joyful event for the whole family but for the parents an expensive one as well, since the "setting out" of a bride cost a considerable sum of money, a well-to-do father often spending as much as £200 for such a purpose. It would be interesting if we could read a description of Mary's wedding, but as none exists, we must be content with the account of a similar event in the neighborhood. *Moose Hill*

The minister, on this occasion, made a speech in which he told the bride and groom and the "pretty deal of company" present that "Love was the sugar to sweeten every condition in the married state." Then after the "sack posset" was drunk, they all sang "the 45th Psalm — 5 staves" and the bridegroom received as a gift from the minister the "very good Turkey Leather Psalm book" which had been used during the service, with the hope that it might be "an introduction" to his "singing with the quire above."

Possibly the bride's garter was scrambled for, as was not uncommon, but let us hope that Elisha was not induced to conform to an ungallant practice which we are told was sometimes followed at weddings. "Just before joining hands the bridegroom quits the place, who is soon followed by the Bridesmen and, as it were, dragged back to duty." More likely it was "Mistress Bride" who was stolen and

Moose Hill held by some of her men friends till the bridegroom redeemed her by the promise of a supper. This custom lingered long in the valley of the Connecticut, and may have prevailed also in the hill towns.

The marriage was a desirable one for Mary, as Elisha, though her junior and only eighteen at the time, was a young man of great promise. He became a prominent merchant in Ripton Centre and owned a large store there, the largest within many miles, so that people came from Norwalk and other places along the Sound to trade with him. "Squire Mills" was influential and respected and was three times sent from Ripton as a representative to the General Assembly, that being the highest honor in the gift of his fellow-townsmen. During the prosperous days of Ripton, therefore, Mary de Forest, as Squire Mills's wife, was an important lady in the community and held an enviable position. The couple lived to a ripe old age; when Mary died in 1817 she was nearly ninety years old. She and Elisha had ten children.

Seeing their sister so happily married, it is not surprising that the other children should have wished to follow her example. Joseph married in 1757 and lived for some years in Stratford. Soon afterward Samuel gave him, as part of his portion, fifteen acres from his own land, and Joseph built a homestead near his father's and, like him, became interested in civic affairs.

Hepzibah, Samuel's third daughter, who was

SQUIRE ELISHA MILLS

MARY DE FOREST MILLS

Owned by Miss Catherine L. Mills, Corning, New York

Grandmother Harvey's pet and pupil, had in 1757 grown into a charming young woman of twenty-two. She had been remarkable even as a child, showing a very unusual appreciation and love of the beautiful, and while still a little tot had once succeeded in catching a humming-bird so that she might hold it gently in her hand and admire the lovely coloring of its plumage. Few advantages had been hers — the slightest kind of schooling and little or no acquaintance with the broadening influences of city life — and yet, by her own innate ability and determination, through all her life she made more out of her talents than do many women who can command every resource. *Moose Hill*

The year after Joseph was married, Hepzibah gave her heart to young Milton Hawley. They were married by Mr. Mills, and we may be sure that Grandmother Harvey, who was still living, was present at her darling's wedding. Afterward Milton and "Hepsy" built a house for themselves on Barn Hill, not far from Hepzibah's old home, on the road which mounted from the Housatonic to the top of Moose Hill. This was the plank house alluded to earlier in the chapter.

Milton Hawley (so named because of his father's great admiration for "Paradise Lost") was an extraordinarily handsome man but not Hepzibah's equal intellectually, though he greatly appreciated his brilliant wife. As a commentary on her love of

Moose Hill beauty, it has been told that when some one asked her how she happened to marry her husband, her candid answer was, "He was the handsomest man I had ever seen." Hepzibah never had beauty herself, although she was tall and erect. After she lost her youth she would not, for many years, look at herself in a glass. One day by chance she glanced into a mirror, saw herself, and fainted.

Her artistic temperament found expression in various ways. She drew her own patterns for the "rugs" which she made and worked in crewels on coarse home-made tow-cloth, filling in the background with black stitches. She painted her window-shades, then always made of paper, from her own designs — flowers and trees and houses with ladies and gentlemen in fine costumes walking on impossibly intricate garden paths.

Above all, she was fond of her flower garden, and we can imagine the riot of color which followed her generous planting. Tradition says that she succeeded in variegating the colors in her bed of pinks by braiding the roots together. What would a modern gardener say of this method!

Reading always interested her, although not many books came within her reach, and she never forgot anything that she read, either prose or poetry. She tried her own hand at verse and some of the poems are still preserved. As she grew older she lost her sight, but she loved to have her children and her

grandchildren about her and used to pass her hands over the faces of the little ones to see if they had inherited the Hawley beauty! Her memory never failed; when she was ninety-five years of age she told a friend that she could repeat hymns from Sunday morning until Saturday night and that if all the books containing Watts's hymns were destroyed, she could supply the text for a new edition from her own recollection, so well had she profited by the teachings of the grandmother she so dearly loved. As she was a grown woman at the time of the Revolutionary War and was possessed of so remarkable a memory, it is not surprising that she was "a mine of wealth to the historians of the early part of the century." One of her nephews who also lived to a great age was never tired of quoting her as an oracle of wisdom. He said that she was indeed his "beau ideal of a noble woman." *Moose Hill*

Her home on Barn Hill was very dear to her; she loved to tell her descendants that such were the charms and healthfulness of that locality that of the nine families who originally settled on the hill "not one of the heads of these families died or removed in fifty years, except one who died about four months before the half century expired."

Hepzibah lived long enough to have a great-great-granddaughter come to visit her. In 1831 she passed away, aged ninety-seven, having been for the last twelve years a widow.

Moose Hill

The plank house in which Hepzibah was so happy is to be seen in excellent preservation to this day; it is painted red with white trimmings, still has its great central chimney, and is yet occupied, though in the garden Hepzibah's pinks no longer grow.

Samuel's son Nehemiah remains to be mentioned. He fell a victim to the charms of a young girl, Mary Lockwood by name, the daughter of Deacon Peter Lockwood of Wilton Parish, Norwalk. They were married in 1769 and Nehemiah brought his bride to live on Moose Hill. In those days the youngest son usually lived at home with his mother and when he married brought his wife to live there also. At such a time it was customary to make some kind of division in the house so that each — mother and daughter — had her own "rights" there, and each respected those of the other. Nehemiah was not the youngest son, but he was the only one left at home and Samuel treated him very handsomely by then giving him as "part of his portion" fifteen acres of land and "one half of my Dwelling house, at ye South end," also "one half of my barn, at ye East end." Lest Abigail should feel that she was no longer mistress in her own home, Samuel gave her the other half of the house and barn and all the land comprised in the "Olde Homestead."

As another chapter is to be devoted to Nehemiah and Mary, we will leave further details of their eventful married life to be told later on.

HOUSE OF HEPZIBAH DE FOREST HAWLEY, BUILT ABOUT 1757

Still to be seen on Barn Hill

Moose Hill

Besides his children, Samuel had two younger brothers, Henry and Benjamin, living near him. Like Samuel, they were public-spirited men and busied themselves with Ripton affairs, church matters in particular occupying much of their time.

To understand the absorbing church interests and relationships of all these de Forests, we must recollect the close alliance between church and state to which we had occasion to refer in connection with the "setting off" of Ripton Parish. Much the same experience now fell to the lot of the settlers on Moose Hill and its vicinity. Some of them lived in the northeastern part of North Stratford Parish and some in the northwestern part of Ripton Parish. To continue any longer attending service at a meeting-house so far distant from their homes seemed to them intolerable. In 1750, therefore, forty of the inhabitants, among them Samuel, his brother Henry, and Edmund Lewis, Jr., all neighbors, sent a memorial to the General Assembly: "Praying liberty . . . to meet among themselves for divine service four months of the year, viz: — December, January, February, and March, for the term of three years from this time, they improving some orthodox preacher among them during said term." [1]

The General Assembly granted their request and freed those then living in North Stratford from paying taxes to the society of that place during the four

[1] Connecticut Colony Records, State Library, Hartford. Ecclesiastical Affairs, vol. VIII, doc. 227.

Moose Hill months named. There was violent opposition to this decision on account of the last clause, North Stratford Society not wishing to lose the amount of revenue contributed by the forty society members. The General Assembly's consent was therefore withdrawn, although the request of the colonists was certainly a reasonable one.

Apparently nothing more was done until March 16, 1761, eleven years later. Then another appeal, representing about seventy families, was sent to the same body, this time asking that the territory beforementioned be set apart as a separate ecclesiastical society and calling attention to the fact that the older parishes were in "comfortable circumstances to maintain and support ye Gospel without us." Their appeal reads: "The nearest of your memorialists to any public worship is about three miles and so upward to seven miles and some more . . . and many of us large families so that it is altogether impossible for us and our families to attend thereon, especially in ye Winter season and other times without extreme difficulty . . . having many of us labored under burden and hardships for more than twenty years, and ye increase of our families together with ye thought of our children being in a great measure deprived of preaching of ye Gospel, thus continuing any longer seems to be a burden insupportable." [1]

[1] Connecticut Colony Records, State Library, Hartford. Ecclesiastical Affairs, vol. XII, doc. 212.

Moose Hill

They proposed that the boundary should run "a little southward of ye south part Mooshill so-called" and begged that a committee might be sent "at ye charge of your memorialists to view ye circumstances of ye proposed parish." The boundary then recommended would have included Samuel de Forest's home.

Both Ripton and North Stratford objected to this proposal also, for the same reasons as before; nevertheless, the following November (1761) a committee of eight, including Samuel, was chosen "to wait on the honorable Committee appointed by the General Assembly to view the said Parish." There was renewed opposition to the plan and many other suggestions were made, with the intent of curtailing the limits of the new parish on the south. Finally, in May, 1762, the committee gave in its report, and the General Assembly, after again altering the boundary, approved the report and named the new ecclesiastical society "New Stratford."

No one of our three friends — Samuel de Forest, Milton Hawley, and Edmund Lewis, Jr. — gained anything by this decision. They all lived on the debatable ground, Samuel's house being on the south side of the "cross highway" which was used as the southern boundary of the new division, and they were left, as they had been before, in Ripton Parish, four miles away from their meeting-house.

Samuel was now in an embarrassing position. He

Moose Hill wanted to attend service in New Stratford Parish and to have his children attend school there, but it was evident that Ripton was very jealous of the new organization. We must remember, too, that Mr. Mills was an old and valued friend of the de Forests and the father-in-law of Samuel's daughter Mary. Squire Mills, her husband, was very prominent in Ripton affairs of all kinds and undoubtedly felt very strongly about this desertion. What was to be done? Samuel, rather than cause trouble in the family, decided to continue to pay his parish and school rates in Ripton, while making use of the church and school on the hilltop. But, neither as a member of the Ripton Parish committee nor as a member of the school committee nor in any other Ripton office do we any longer find the name of Samuel de Forest.

Previous to this petition some kind of winter parish had been in existence on the hilltop; in fact, it is said that the Rev. Mr. Mills was in the habit of holding a service there in a "barnlike building" every third Sunday. Whether the building were "barnlike" or not made no difference to the inhabitants of Moose Hill, who longed to worship near their own homes, and so in October, 1767, four members of the Lewis family sent yet another appeal[1] to the General Assembly, praying that the New Stratford boundary be once more altered so as to include them. It must

[1] Connecticut Colony Records, State Library, Hartford. Ecclesiastical Affairs, vol. XII, p. 215.

have been particularly annoying to Samuel to have them "pray" that the new line should begin "at the mouth of the lane by Samll. Deforest's barn between the Dwelling house of sd. Deforest and the Dwelling house of Thomas Lewis." This added insult to injury, for the appeal was granted, again cutting Samuel off from his longed-for haven and that merely by the width of a lane! *Moose Hill*

The Lewises now worshipped contentedly in New Stratford. The de Forests waited a little longer and then Samuel and his sons Joseph and Nehemiah, thinking that they also might surely aspire to such privileges as were granted to others, sent a final memorial to the General Assembly in May, 1770. The answer to this is here given in full.

Upon the Memorial of Samuel Deforest, Joseph Deforest and Nehemiah Deforest, Inhabitants of ye Parish of Ripton in ye Town of Stratford, Shewing to this Assembly that they live at great Distance from the place of Publick worship in said Parish of Ripton, and that they live so near to ye Place of Publick worship in the Parish of New Stratford in said town of Stratford that they conveniently can and actually do attend Publick Worship in said Parish of New Stratford, and that the whole of the Schooling of there Children is within said New Stratford Parish; Praying that ye Memorialists together with their Famalies and estats might bee sett off and annexed to the Parish of said New Stratford to all Intents and Purposes;

Resolved by this Assembly, that ye Memorialists

Moose Hill together with their Famalies and estats bee and they hereby are sett off and annexed to said Parish of New Stratford and Exempted from Paying any Parochial or School charges for the future in said Parrish of Ripton, and to Injoy all Society Previledges and pay all Society and School Rates in said Parrish of New Stratford.[1]

So these three de Forests then became members in regular standing of New Stratford Parish; but Samuel, being a thrifty New Englander, succeeded in having "ye sum of Eighteen Shillings Reducted out of his Ministers' Rate" for the year because he joined the ecclesiastical society in May instead of January.

Great as was the satisfaction to Samuel and Abigail in being at last included in the parish to which they logically belonged, the society privileges had come too late to be of benefit in bringing up even the youngest members of their family. In 1770 their sons and daughters, with the exception of Nehemiah, were no longer in the Moose Hill home. All then living were married — three sons and four daughters — and, with the exception noted above, had gone to homes of their own.

Samuel was now sixty-six years old, Abigail sixty-three; and as the latter had had a goodly amount of land left to her by her father, Samuel Peat, she

[1] Connecticut Colony Records, State Library, Hartford. Ecclesiastical Affairs, vol. XIII, doc. 2.

decided, "with the allowance, aprobation and consent" of her husband to make her will while she was still "of sound mind and memory." She began, as was the custom of the day, by saying, "I resign my soul into the hands of God who gave it . . . and my body to return to the dust whence it was taken." *Moose Hill*

It is to be noted that Abigail's estate consisted principally of land. As was usual, she left to her eldest son, Joseph, more than to her other sons — "Ten pounds worth in lands" over and above the tracts given to them. To her four daughters — those dear girls with whom she had lived in such intimate and mutually helpful association in the household — she left nothing! One would think that merely from sentiment she would have liked to give each of them a choice bit of land, but this omission also was according to custom. The will gives this explanation: "They being all married off and my said husband having already given to each of them what I think sufficient." All the remainder was to be divided among her three sons: Joseph, Nehemiah, and David, "in such manner and proportion as to make them equal recconing what my said husband has already given any of them by deed."

One other provision she made. Should her husband "live and stand in need of said estate for his support," the executors (Samuel himself and Nehemiah) were to sell enough land to furnish him with an "honorable support." This was presumably

Moose Hill in anticipation of an old age for her husband, but neither Samuel nor Abigail lived to be very old. Abigail died on September 21, 1776, aged seventy years; and Samuel, six months later, on March 24, 1777, aged seventy-three.

As Samuel at the time of his death belonged to the parish of New Stratford, he and Abigail were undoubtedly interred in the "new burying ground," but all traces of graves there have long ago disappeared.

Neither Samuel's will nor his inventory has been found, but Abigail's personal estate was appraised by her sons-in-law, Elisha Mills and Milton Hawley, at nearly £1,000, even at the low valuation undoubtedly put upon it. She owned the "Olde Homestead" on Moose Hill (over twenty-eight acres) and the "equal half of the house and barn standing thereon," valued at £220. There were also mentioned the Tylee lot, twenty-three acres, £100; Kady lot, fourteen acres, £117; east side of the highway, twenty-three acres, £137; at Deep Brook, eighteen acres, £105; adjoining the homestead of Joseph de Forest deceased, forty-five acres, £292. A goodly inheritance for her sons!

What had become of Samuel and Abigail's large family [1] at the time of the parents' decease? Mary Mills was still living in Ripton. Hepzibah Hawley

[1] For an account of Samuel's children see Appendix, p. 297.

was in her home on Barn Hill. Martha and Elizabeth were both married and apparently had moved elsewhere. Of the sons, Joseph, Samuel, and Josiah were dead, David had moved to Derby, on the banks of the Housatonic, and Nehemiah alone, of all that large family, was left on that lovely hilltop. *Moose Hill*

VII

THE DE FORESTS IN WAR TIME

THE death of Samuel de Forest of Moose Hill has brought our record down to the year following the Declaration of American Independence. Samuel himself was too old a man to take part in the Revolutionary War, although he was active, as we know, in the local military organizations; but his son Nehemiah was in the prime of manhood during the stirring days of the colonial struggle with England. Nehemiah's part in that struggle will be told in the chapter relating especially to him. Before we begin our story of Nehemiah's life, however, it seems worth while to pause long enough to offer the facts that we have gleaned concerning those de Forests whose war records have been preserved to us, and something, as well, of the part played by Connecticut during the war. Nehemiah will then be seen against the background of his period.

So far we have spoken of this family as simple farmer-folk, tilling their lands and trading with their neighbors, not concerned, however, with their home industries only, but giving much time and thought to two outside interests: the affairs of their ecclesiastical societies and of their train bands. Their

military exercises were now to be of practical value to them in the stern years of the Revolutionary War.

The Connecticut Revolutionary records are very incomplete and it is extremely difficult — in fact, impossible — to give an accurate account of the doings of the descendants of David de Forest of Stratford during the war, but the following notes have been compiled with as much care as possible from the military records of Connecticut, from the files of the Pension and War Offices in Washington, and from items discovered in old letters and papers.

Before 1739 the militia of Connecticut had a company organization only, but at that time the law-making body of the colony enacted that these companies be formed into properly officered regiments with the Governor as Commander-in-chief, and that all males between sixteen and fifty years of age should bear arms and attend the musters and reviews.[1] In spite of this forethought on the part of the colonists, in the year 1774 all the able-bodied men in the colony, whether already drilled or not, who could be counted on as militia and called on for the defense of Connecticut did not exceed twenty-three thousand.[2]

[1] Hinman, R. R. Historical Collection . . . of the part sustained by Conn. during the War of the Revolution, p. 9.

[2] Hinman, R. R. War of the American Revolution, p. 12; Record of Service of Connecticut Men in the War of the Revolution, p. 428.

Such were the military resources of the colony when in June, 1774, the "Boston Port Bill" was promulgated and the harbor of Boston blockaded. Great excitement reigned all through Connecticut, and Stratford and her sister towns passed resolutions of sympathy and "took into their serious consideration the unhappy circumstances of the poor people of Boston, now suffering in the common cause of American liberty under the oppressive acts of the British Parliament called the Boston Port Bill; and thereupon unanimously voted, that a subscription be immediately opened, and collection be made and sent as soon as may be, for the relief of the poor sufferers in that town." [1] Contributions of all kinds, including live stock and breadstuffs, were sent from Connecticut to Boston.

In a very short time fuel was added to the flame by reports that the British ships were bombarding Boston and that the inhabitants were being massacred. Then all the colony rose with the cry, "To arms!" Guns were put in order, ammunition made ready, and soon the roads to Boston were crowded with men hurrying thither. Hinman says, "By the most moderate computation, there were in the colony of Connecticut alone, not less than twenty thousand men completely armed, actually on their march for Boston, with full speed, until counter intelligence

[1] Orcutt, Rev. Samuel. History of Stratford and Bridgeport, p. 373.

was received on the road. This alarm was on the 3d of September, 1774." [1] According to this statement, which is probably exaggerated, the number of men who thus sprang forward to the defense of their brothers in Boston was within three thousand of the full fighting strength of the colony.

Liberty poles now began to be erected in most of the towns of Connecticut, many of them over one hundred feet high, and the enthusiasts called themselves the "Sons of Liberty." The winter of 1775 was a period of suspense; even the Connecticut Assembly spoke of "the dark and gloomy aspect of Divine Providence."

On April 19, 1775, the battle of Lexington took place. Apparently Stratford sent no contingent — in truth, many of her citizens were at this time rather lukewarm or still "loyal to the British Crown" — but the feeling of the townspeople as expressed in the Town Records certainly rings true. Immediately after the battle a small group of prominent Connecticut men organized an expedition for the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, even borrowing the necessary money from the colonial treasury and making themselves personally responsible for its return. According to one authority, Colonel David Wooster of New Haven (who by birth belonged to Stratford) was one of the promoters of this daring

[1] Hinman, R. R. War of the American Revolution, p. 20.

undertaking.[1] Ethan Allen, himself from Connecticut, as were many of the men in the expedition, succeeded, as we all know, in surprising Ticonderoga on May 10th and in wresting the fort from the hands of the British without the loss of a man. This was perhaps the most brilliant exploit of the war and also the first offensive military operation of the Americans.

There is no record of any de Forests having been present at Ticonderoga, but we shall see that some of them had already answered the call of their country.

In April, 1775, the General Assembly at New Haven had ordered that one quarter of the Connecticut militia be enlisted for "the safety and defence of the colony." Six regiments were therefore raised, and of these General David Wooster, who had already served in the French and Indian War, was placed in command with the rank of Major-General. Privates in this militia organization were paid £2 per month for their services, and those who furnished their own arms — gun, cartouche box, and bayonet — received ten shillings extra. The description of a body of soldiers of this period given years afterward by an aged man brings their picture vividly before us.

[1] Hinman, R. R. War of the American Revolution, p. 141. See also, for a different account, Johnston, H. P. Record of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, p. 29.

To a man they wore small clothes coming down and fastening just below the knee and long stockings with cowhide shoes ornamented by large buckles, while not a pair of boots graced the company. The coats and waistcoats were loose and of huge dimensions with colors as various as the barks of oak, sumach and other trees of our hills and swamps could make them, and their shirts were all made of flax and like every other part of the dress were homespun. On their heads were worn a large round top and broad brimmed hat. Their arms were as various as their costume; here and there an old soldier carried a heavy queen's arm, with which he had done service at the conquest of Canada 20 years previous, while by his side walked a stripling boy with a Spanish fuzee not half its weight or calibre, which his grandfather may have taken at Havana, while not a few had old French pieces that dated back to the reduction of Louisburg. Instead of a cartridge box a large powder horn was slung under the arm and occasionally a bayonet might be seen bristling in the ranks. Some of the swords of the officers had been made by our province blacksmiths, perhaps from some farming utensil. They looked serviceable but heavy and uncouth.[1]

Undoubtedly the fall of Ticonderoga and the garrisoning of the fort with a force of 1,000 men stimulated the patriotism of all who had already enlisted and caused many others to enter their country's service. In any event, among those who had already responded to the Connecticut Assem-

[1] Cothren, William. History of Woodbury, vol. 1, pp. 205–06.

bly's first call for troops we find the names of several de Forests. On May 8th SAMUEL DE FOREST, son of David of Wilton 1st,[1] and his nephew, DAVID of Wilton 3rd (son of Samuel's brother David), had enlisted in the Fifth Connecticut Militia Regiment. A few days later two of their cousins, WILLIAM, son of Edward of Stratford, and HENRY, son of Henry of Moose Hill, both grandsons of David of Stratford, also enlisted in the same regiment. They were all young, their ages ranging from seventeen to twenty-nine years, and of course they were filled with zealous enthusiasm for the cause in which they were enrolled.[2]

Samuel of Wilton

David of Wilton, 3rd

William

Henry

The Fifth Connecticut, which was recruited mainly in Fairfield County, was a popular regiment with these young de Forests. It was gallantly commanded by Colonel David Waterbury of Stamford, and its white standard with the Connecticut coat of arms on one side and on the other the golden legend, "An Appeal to Heaven," expressed very character-

[1] It must be explained that the sons of David de Forest of Stratford may be identified by their Christian names followed by the names of their places of residence, as David of Wilton, Samuel of Moose Hill, Isaac of New Milford, Edward of Stratford, Henry of Moose Hill, and Benjamin of Ripton.

[2] The complete records so far as we know them of Samuel and his nephew David, of their cousins, William and Henry, and of all the other de Forests serving in the Revolutionary War, or in the French and Indian War, are to be found in the Appendix, pp. 317 ff.

istically the spirit of the times. At the instance of the Continental Congress and the New York authorities the regiment marched in June to New York, doing guard duty in Harlem and Long Island until about September 28th, when, again under orders from Congress, it went to the Northern Department under Major-General David Wooster. At Ticonderoga Wooster joined General Montgomery, and after this gallant officer was killed before Quebec on December 31, 1775, Wooster was appointed to fill his place as Commander-in-chief. About this time the Fifth Connecticut was formally included in the "Continental Line." With the other seven Connecticut regiments raised in this year it had been considered "Continental" from the time of its first activity. There was some disaffection and much sickness among the men, and many discharges are recorded for October and November, among others those of William and Henry de Forest in the former month. David remained with the regiment until the term of its first enlistment expired in December, 1775. Of Samuel we know that although he was discharged from the regiment on September 17th he must have promptly re-enlisted, for his name is among those of the Fifth Connecticut who in 1775 "returned their arms at Ticonderoga by order of the general."

The record for the year 1776 is difficult to follow, but it is clear that the three Connecticut regiments

doing duty in Canada returned home in December, 1775. The Fifth Connecticut practically lost its identity until the reorganization of 1777, when we again find Samuel on its rolls, this time as a sergeant. It is possible he may have served with General David Wooster in a small state force along the Westchester border, or he may with more probability have followed the fortunes of his Colonel, David Waterbury, under whose leadership one of the Connecticut regiments was then raised. These troops served from February to April, 1776, throwing up defenses in New York and vicinity. Later in the spring Colonel, then Brigadier-General Waterbury, was appointed to the command of two regiments which served under General Gates in the Northern Department. Waterbury was assigned to service with the flotilla on Lake Champlain under General Arnold. The rolls for both of these organizations, which served in New York and Canada, are incomplete, which fact may explain the absence of any record for 1776 of Samuel and possibly of his friends in the old Fifth Connecticut. In any event, we know Samuel to have been a "Regular" practically from the beginning of the war until its end, and to have attained the rank of Lieutenant. We shall hear more of his exploits later, but we must return for the present to Stratford and the year 1775.

All was now enthusiasm in the town, and every-

one was eager to enlist or, at any rate, to be enrolled among the militia who could be called upon when necessary. The old people as well as the young were thus affected, for the historian Hinman tells us, "About sixty aged gentlemen of Middletown (as was the case in other towns in Connecticut) formed themselves into a company to attain the military art, with a determination of preserving the liberty of their country; the drummer of said company was over eighty years of age, and was as much engaged and alert as in his younger days."

A meeting between Washington and Lafayette which occurred at Stratford in 1775 added to the excitement. Lafayette, with some other officers approaching the Housatonic unheralded from the eastward, was ferried across to the Stratford landing-place. There the innkeeper's little daughter, whom he found picking berries, conducted him up the old Ferry Road to her father's tavern, where General Washington was already awaiting him, the latter having arrived in an equally unexpected manner from the opposite direction. The two generals dined together on whatever simple fare the tavern afforded, including some potatoes, in those days quite a rarity, despatched their business, and then departed as quietly as they had come. We can imagine, however, the great excitement which the news of this meeting caused throughout the countryside when it became known, and the fresh enthusiasm

to serve their country which it created among the young recruits.

In June, 1776, Washington's army at New York needed reinforcement, and the First Connecticut Battalion, commanded by Colonel Gold S. Silliman of Fairfield, was ordered to its assistance. The young men of Ripton could no longer resist. Another

Samuel the Fifer

SAMUEL DE FOREST, son of Joseph of Moose Hill and eldest grandson of Samuel and Abigail, hastened to enter this battalion. He was only eighteen years old, but he had already served for six months in a company of volunteers raised in Stratford for the defense of New York. Samuel was a fifer, and we may be sure that he stepped out proudly leading his battalion with the other fifes and drums. It is related of him that he was in charge at this time of a boat-load of wheat sent to Washington from Long Island. Samuel the Fifer,[1] as we shall call him, was later among the militia who served during the Fairfield alarm when the town was burned in 1779. Of him we shall hear more presently.

Timothy

His cousin TIMOTHY, son of Henry of Moose Hill, who was a few years older than Samuel, enlisted at the same time. Timothy was in Fort Washington when it fell on November 16th, and was made a prisoner with the rest of the garrison.

A couple of months after these enrollments, David

[1] Samuel's record is burdened with some inconsistencies. For a full statement of these, see Appendix, p. 328 ff.

of Wilton 3rd, nephew of Lieutenant Samuel, having returned from his northern service, re-enlisted in a Connecticut militia regiment, which was also summoned to the relief of Washington. His cousin URIAH DE FOREST, another grandson of David of Wilton 1st, went in the same regiment, and both were in active service during the summer of 1776. *Uriah*

ISAAC DE FOREST of New Milford, another cousin, was a neighbor of the Wilton de Forests. He was an older man, forty-two years old at this time, and had seen service in two campaigns during the French and Indian War. In this same June, 1776, he was appointed a first lieutenant [1] in Colonel Silliman's battalion and was engaged in the battles of Long Island and White Plains. *Isaac*

Nehemiah de Forest, the innkeeper, son of Samuel of Moose Hill, who was now living at New Stratford, although he did not enlist, performed the equally necessary and important service of collecting funds and provisions for the suffering armies.

Minister Rexford, too, the beloved guardian of the New Stratford flock, was not to be outdone. He was "loyal to country and to freedom," and when so

[1] In the War Office there is a record dated June, 1776, which shows Isaac to have been appointed by the Assembly Lieutenant-Colonel of the First Battalion of Connecticut troops, one of the six battalions ordered to be raised and sent to New York to join the Continental Army. This record says that he "served," but we can find no other verification of his having held a higher rank than that of first lieutenant.

many of his parishioners enlisted, he also, in 1776, joined one of the Connecticut regiments as chaplain.

Before the summer of 1776 was over no less than ten young Connecticut de Forests had enlisted. One was a son of David of Wilton 1st and two his grandsons, one was a grandson of Samuel of Moose Hill, two were sons of Henry of Moose Hill, one was a son of Edward of Stratford, and one a son of Isaac of New Milford, while among those whose exact connection with the Stratford de Forests it has not been possible to trace, at least two, REUBEN and EBENEZER of Stamford, were also fighting for their country.

Reuben

Ebenezer

Except for the state militia service and the campaign in the Northern Department, all the Connecticut troops which we have mentioned were in or near New York until after the defeat on Long Island and the evacuation of New York City in August, 1776. The troops from Connecticut were then disbanded — if so formal a term may be applied to the extremely informal manner of their departure — and the men returned to their neglected homes.

What had become of their farms during the absence of the farmer-soldiers, many of whom had been away from home during two summers? The women had to do their best. They made themselves familiar with the use of plough, axe, and sickle; they harvested the crops of 1775, and planted, as best they could, for the crops of 1776. An old woman of Connecticut, when questioned long years afterward as to

DAVID WOOSTER, ESQR., COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE PROVINCIAL ARMY AGAINST QUEBEC

how many of the men went to the war, promptly answered, "They all did!"

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by the Continental Congress, and it became the grave responsibility of each separate colony to sanction it. Connecticut was the first colony to vote for this measure, which she did the following October.

In April, 1777, the British for the first time invaded Connecticut. The object of their raid was the destruction of a large deposit of military stores and provisions held at Danbury by the colonists. The militia within reach, only six hundred in all, were hastily collected to defend the towns of Danbury and Ridgefield, but being unprepared and inexperienced, they were completely routed, and many of the officers were killed or wounded. A Lieutenant de Forest — probably Isaac — who was present with the rest of his company, was shot in the leg in the Ridgefield engagement. The gallant David Wooster, who had hastened to the relief of Danbury, received a mortal wound and died on April 27th. He was a brave officer, an ardent patriot, and his loss was greatly felt throughout the state and indeed throughout the country.

On January 1, 1777, some months before the Danbury raid, "32 able-bodied men in Ripton Parish" enlisted and chose their own officers. Among them was NEHEMIAH, son of Benjamin of Ripton. He later *Nehemiah*

became a corporal in a Connecticut militia regiment and did good service.

Joseph Joseph de Forest, son of Edward of Stratford,
James and his cousin James enlisted in the Fourth Regiment, Connecticut Militia. With others they were detached in March, 1777, to form a company of guards under Captain James Booth. They were stationed at Fairfield and Stratford and may have been present at the Danbury raid in April, 1777.

Samuel the Fifer, who gave his country almost continuous service during these early years of the
Abel war, had three younger brothers, of whom two, Abel
Mills and Mills by name, enlisted at about this time. Abel served in militia companies, doing guard duty at Stratford, probably in 1777, and in the neighborhood of Horseneck in 1778. Mills went with another company of Connecticut militia to do guard duty at Saw Pitts (Port Chester), New York, in 1778, and served in Stratford in the same year. Although younger than Abel, he was before him in entering the Continental service, for we find him joining the army at White Plains in midsummer of the same year, whence he was sent to work on the military road from Hartford to Danbury! After some intervening months of militia service, he again joined the Connecticut Line in July, 1779. Abel, too, had meanwhile joined a state regiment, the Sixth, in May, 1779, and saw practically constant service for some time thereafter.

Other de Forests continued to enlist. ELISHA, son of Edward of Stratford, who had already fought in the French and Indian War, although older than most of his soldier nephews and cousins, enlisted again in 1779. He became a lieutenant and later a captain. *Elisha*

A certain cousin of his, ELIHU by name, a son of David of Wilton, had also served in two campaigns of the French and Indian War. He too was a man of some maturity — forty-two years or over — but in 1779 he enrolled himself on the Alarm List of the same regiment with Elisha and the following year was advanced to be a captain. Two years afterward, DAVID LAMBERT DE FOREST, a grandson of David of Wilton, also appears in the militia records. *Elihu* *David Lambert*

Before we carry our story to any later date, we must pause to say more of the first soldier de Forest whom we mentioned — the one whose service was also the most notable, Lieutenant Samuel of Wilton. When we last saw him he had returned from the Northern Department with Wooster and in the spring of 1777 was encamped at Peekskill. On October 4th of the same year his regiment, the Fifth Connecticut Line, fought in General McDougall's Brigade with Washington in the battle of Germantown and was with him during the terrible winter of hardship and suffering at Valley Forge in 1777–78. The regiment was present at the battle of Monmouth and wintered in 1778–79 at Redding. In *Lieutenant Samuel*

1779–80 it wintered at the "Morristown huts" and spent the following summer on the Hudson. The winter of 1780–81, a frightfully cold season, was spent at Connecticut Village[1] on the Hudson. The soldiers often had to work without shoes and stockings when the snow was half-leg deep.

In the summer of 1779 Lieutenant Samuel de Forest was made one of a special corps, known as Meigs's Light Regiment, composed of picked men from all the regiments then under Washington's immediate command, to serve under General Anthony Wayne. It was this corps which was engaged in the gallant and successful assault on Stony Point on July 16, 1779.

While Washington was absent in Virginia in the fall of 1781, the Fifth Connecticut was stationed under General Heath in the Highlands on the Hudson River, where the troops had little to do except to guard against attacks from parties of the British, who were then in possession of New York. The winter of comparative inaction gave them plenty of

[1] In December, 1779, one of the officers in this same camp wrote: "The lads bore it with the greatest patience and fortitude . . . after our arrival we began and completed our hutts which destroyed our clothing still more. . . . Many a good lad with nothing to cover him from his hips to his toes save his blanket." A year later when the huts were no longer in good condition, Heath gave orders that "50 men from the Conn. line of those worst clad under command of proper officers are to be sent to repair the huts." Let us hope "those worst clad" were given new uniforms.

time to watch with great interest the movements of the Commander-in-chief and to indulge in a military jubilee when they heard the news of the surrender of Cornwallis on October 19, 1781.[1]

During this period of inactivity occurred an exploit in which our Samuel greatly distinguished himself. The affair was mentioned in General Heath's orders of November 18, 1781. "On the morning of the 13th inst., Lieut. De Forest of the Connecticut Line with about 25 Regular Troops, & Capt. Lockwood of the militia, with 15 volunteers, including Lieuts. Hull & Mead, of the Connecticut State Troops, form'd a design to board an arm'd Sloop of 10 carriage guns, then at anchor in East Chester Bay, which they effected with much address & great gallantry; besides the arm'd sloop five or six wood vessels were taken & in the whole about 40 prisoners, 25 of which were soldiers; the whole was conducted much to the honor of all concerned.

"The Genl. presents his thanks to Lieut. De Forrest, Capt. Lockwood, Lts. Hull & Mead & all the troops employ'd on the enterprise for their gal-

[1] Tidings of this surrender reached Stratford while the Rev. Izrahiah Wetmore was preaching his Sunday sermon. The news was taken immediately to the pulpit, where the pastor made it known to the congregation and then, drawing himself to his greatest height (and he was a very tall man), he said: "It is no place for boisterous demonstration in the house of God — but, brethren, in giving three cheers, we may at least go through the motions!" And they did.

lant behavior." [1] Samuel de Forest, being a lieutenant in the Regulars, was no doubt in command of the expedition and outranked Captain Lockwood.[2]

In connection with Samuel of Wilton it is amusing to remember that part of the statue of George III, torn down in New York in 1776 to be melted into bullets, had been taken to Wilton to supply lead for the Wilton troops. Samuel's belt (if that was where he carried his bullets) was probably full of his Hanoverian Majesty and the stubborn old gentleman may even have served, as it were, against himself in this capture of his sloop!

When the war was over, Lieutenant Samuel de Forest with his brother officers became members of the Connecticut division of the Society of the Cincinnati, the gallant band that desired "to perpetuate . . . the remembrance of this vast event . . . the mutual friendships . . . formed under the pressure of common danger . . . and cemented by blood." Possessing "high veneration for the character of that illustrious Roman, Lucius Quintius Cincinnatus, and being resolved to follow his example by returning to their citizenship," they thought they might "with propriety denominate themselves The Society of the Cincinnati."

[1] Record of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, p. 306.

[2] Captain Eliphalet Lockwood of Wilton, brother of Nehemiah de Forest's wife, Mary Lockwood, who greatly distinguished himself during the war.

Meanwhile the young de Forests of Moose Hill were also serving their country faithfully, either in militia regiments or in those state organizations which were under the authority of Congress. In 1778, GIDEON DE FOREST, then not yet fourteen years old, the youngest son of Joseph of Moose Hill and brother of Samuel the Fifer, enlisted in a militia company. Later he was in Waterbury's Brigade and still later in "whale-boat service" under Captain John Barlow. *Gideon*

In the summer of 1780, when the war was still dragging its weary length, Gideon's elder brothers, Abel and Mills, were on the rolls of the Fifth Regiment, Connecticut Line, in which so many of their family had already enlisted. In this organization the brothers saw active service on the Hudson and elsewhere. They were present at the hanging of Major André, Abel being so near that he laid his hand on the scaffold.[1] *Abel Mills*

[1] It is a matter of general information that André was accompanied on the way to the place of his execution by four officers detailed for this duty. "A captain's company of some thirty or forty men marched immediately about these, while an outer guard of five hundred infantry environed the whole and formed a hollow square around the gibbet." Sargent, Winthrop. Life of André, p. 442. In view of the fact that two members of the court that tried André General Samuel Parsons, of New London, and General Jedediah Huntington, of Norwich, were brigade commanders serving with Connecticut troops on the Hudson at this time, it is extremely probable that the regiment of Mills and Abel was represented at the execution.

These four grandsons of our old friends Samuel and Abigail are often spoken of as the "Four Revolutionary Brothers." As they were going off to the war, their mother, Susanna Mills de Forest, said to them, "My sons, I hope you will do honor to yourselves and to your country." We know that they did. A long time afterward, in 1835, the four brothers, who were all on the pension roll of their country, had a reunion at the home of Gideon at Edmeston, New York. It was over half a century since they had all been together, and they were now seventy-seven, seventy-four, seventy-two, and seventy years of age. A local paper said: "They are upwards of six feet in height, strongly built, and with one exception they all walk with a firm step."

We are fortunate in having preserved to us the personal narrative of the oldest brother, Samuel the Fifer. This narrative, here reprinted in its entirety, was found in the files of the Government Pension Office in Washington, attached to Samuel's application for a pension, made in 1832 when he was seventy-four years of age.[1]

[1] For full details of Samuel's service see Appendix, p. 328 ff.

Narrative of Samuel de Forest son of Joseph and eldest grandson of Samuel and Abigail

Samuel the Fifer

In the Fall of 1775 when the British evacuated Boston went to Halifax and there wintered General Lee with directions from Washington went to New York to advertise them to make preparations to receive them next Spring on the way to New York He gave notice to Conn. that they would be invited to throw their strength toward New York Capt. Sam'l Blackman inhabitant of North Stratford (part of the time of Old Stratford) Captain of Company of Light Horse made in December would not wait to be Drafted he would raise a Company of Volunteer Infantry and march on foot to New York Raised Company at once I enlisted in his Company Command marched (as well as I can remember) about November 1st Passed old Fairfield Norwalk Middlesex Stamford Horse Neck last town in Conn. First town in New York Rye New Katchel [New Castle] Estchester Westchester Kingsbridge Harlem New York Capt. Blackman was introduced to the New York Committee which was the Highest Authority in the Country Capt. Blackman was the 1st Company of Volunteers or Militia to offer Service in fortifying New York He proposed that we might soon Set about it.

New York commanded by Gen.l Lee Orders met us on the grand parade It was on a cold day and he was drest with a coarse blue duffelse overcoat he gave us a Short address it was with perth [pith?] and brev-

Samuel the Fifer

ity he went to Phila, where congress then Set From some authority we were sent up to Harlam swamps to make fashheans [fascines] it was inquired for what use are they and how made fashheans are a Substitute for stones to make walls or forts they were used for those purposes long before the christian era history informs us that Julius Caesar by Seting a row of post in the ground and anothere row on the opposite side and then by placing bunches of fashsheans on the inside of the 2 rows of post and then casting in the center gravil or sand this course will make a strong wall or fort we eat breakfast early and travelled from 7 to 8 miles and did our Stunt which was to make 2 bunches of fashsheans and return to our lodgings a fashshean must be 8 foot long 7 or 8 inches thick fastened with a withe at each end and a withe in the middle the New York committee employed carmon to convey the bunches of fashshean where they were to be used for forts when warm weather began to comon we made a tryal and proceeded well in making a fort with fashsheans[1] but by this time a new Gen.l presented himself to us his name was Thomson[2] he was the 1st Europeon who had presented himself before Congress with recommendatory documents his personal appearance was elegant and his address to his adopted

[1] "The shore of Manhattan Island was girded with small forts and redoubts, which Lee had erected in the spring before his departure for South Carolina."

John Fiske. American Revolution, vol. 1, p. 205.

[2] William Thompson. He served honorably in the French and Indian War, and was placed in command of the first troops raised on the demand of the Continental Congress — a battalion of eight companies recruited after the battle of Lexington.

country was Eloquence he left us that day and went to our Northern army Capt. Blackman soon began to make arrangements to return home there was an eastern man lay at the Dock with a vessel he hired him to take us to fairfield or Norwalk but he landed at Middlesex I cannot tell nothing about the date except the *people were ploughing and sowing grain* I had a short respet (5 months and ½) we began to hear of New York that the British army was fast assembling and pitching there tents on Statton Island and that Gen.l Washington was calling in the Militia from all Quarters and according to the best of my reccollection some time about July 1st Col. Lewis' [1] Regiment was called on to repare to New York with his Regiment Capt. Tomlinson [2] of the parish of Ripton and Lieut. Peter Curtiss of the parish of North Stratford was to make out a Company between them I think we commenced our March not fare from July 1st I have some impression on my mind that Capt. Tomlinson with some of his men went by water and that Lieut Curtiss and myself who was Waiter to Lieut Curtiss and some othere ones went by land *Samuel the Fifer*

Col. Lewis had for his allarm post the Grand battery and at the beatting of the revolee every morning was with his Regiment at his post a rigid and Strict discipline was observed through the army and Militia troops were flocking in from all parts of the country and to quench the ardor of the British army and in

[1] Lieutenant-Colonel Ichabod Lewis, of Stratford, in Colonel Gold S. Silliman's Regiment, the 4th Conn. Militia, composed of companies from Fairfield and Stratford.

[2] Captain Beach Tomlinson, 4th Regiment, Conn. Militia.

Samuel the Fifer

some measure keep them at bay all the commesaries and the Stuards in the army were proclaiming almost continually that they issued more than 1000,000 rations a day Soon after we arrived in the City the declaration of independence was read in Gen.l Orders at the head of all the Regiments Major Generals Lord Sterling and Sullavan and Several Brigadier Gen.ls with more than 20,000 troops[1] went over to Long Island and the British mean while where Sending troops from Stattan Island to Long Island on the 28th day of August[2] before Col. Lewis had left his larrum post we could see boats passing and repassing from Stattan to Long Island loaded with men after sun rise we returned to our own Qrs. and after breakfast Col. Lewis with some of his officers among the rest Lieut. Curtiss being his waiter I was permited to follow the Company up Several flits of Stars till we reached the top of the roof from which we could plainly discern the British soldiers were landing at the foot of a road

[1] Johnston, the historian of the New York campaign, carefully estimates the full strength of Washington's force, deducts the sick and absent, and then states, "We have, all told, between 19,000 and 20,000 effectives on August 27th."

Henry P. Johnston, Campaign of 1776 around New York and Brooklyn, p. 125.

The American forces on Long Island numbered "9,000 men — one half of the army."

John Fiske, American Revolution, vol. 1, p. 206.

[2] The battle of Long Island took place August 27th.

The landing of the main body of Howe's troops on Long Island was made on August 22nd at Gravesend Bay. On the 25th an additional corps of Hessian troops under General De Heister was conveyed to Gravesend Bay.

Henry B. Carrington, Battles of American Revolution, p. 199.

perhaps 3 quarters of a mile south of Brooklan ferry [1] leading an eastern direction the road appeared about 4 rods wide and the road was constantly filled with men the road ascended gradually about 40 rods and then lay on a level the motion of the men's bodies while under march which of course would give motion to their burnished arms which came in contact with the rays of a brilliant morning Sun which to the eye greamed [gleamed?] like sheets of fire this road was filled up with reinforcements from Stattan Island for Six hours. and this time and much longer the battle

Samuel the Fifer

[1] Samuel is aware that British troops had been landed on Long Island before the episode which he here describes so graphically — witness his remark that the British meanwhile were sending troops from Staten Island to Long Island. But no one of the reference books consulted mentions a landing made by the British so near Brooklyn Ferry. It would seem to be highly improbable that any troops should have attempted to disembark so clearly within the zone occupied by the Americans. It is equally improbable that Samuel and his comrades on the Battery could have seen the soldiers as they reached the historic landing-place far down the lower harbor on Gravesend Bay. The watchers on the Battery, however, might have witnessed an embarkation from Staten Island. In E. M. Avery's History of the United States (vol. VI, p. 16) there is an admirable map of the battlefield of Long Island, showing Gowanus Bay. Here, against a point in the bay conceivably within Samuel's line of vision, is the legend: "Marines landed from Ad. Howe's fleet to re-enforce Gen. Grant Aug. 27." This would seem to be the verification which we are seeking. On the whole our narrative bears so well the test of comparison with other sources of information, and Samuel's account at this point is so circumstantial and his impressions so vivid that it seems reasonable to believe his story to be based upon some detail of fact not fully noted in other records.

Samuel the Fifer was fithing about 11 o'clock Col. Lewis had order to march his Regt. along the Dock opposite Brooklin farry[1] and when there saw an officer on horseback we concluded he was one of the General's aid's he informed us that he was calling for Volunteers to turn out and man every water craft which lay along the Dock all must know there was dreadful fighting and if our men were driven to retreat we wish to be able to bring them over this Tide one Wells Judson and myself turned out a perreauger was commited to our charg and we landed at Brookly ferry about (?) One o'clock the thunder of the British Artillery the roaring of the small arms of both armies was tremendious

Judson and I walked up the ferry road and lay Down under a Shade for it was very warm and I drank some cold water while we lay under the board fence perhaps an hour ruminating on the terrors of the Day we heard the traping of men just over the knowl but we had hardly time to think before they hove in sight and the road was filled with red-coat regiments and again we had hardly time for Surprise before we saw they were prisoners and they were hurried over the ferry and threw the City and over the Hudson into Jersey we concluded there was between two and three hundred of them the firing ceased a little before sun down and a number of us go into a small boat and went back to our Regt. we learned soon that the flower of the army was killed and taken prisoner that Gen'l Lord

[1] "By the morning of the 28th the commander-in-chief had drawn to the Brooklyn lines all the troops that could be spared from other points . . . something over nine thousand five hundred men fit for duty."

Henry P. Johnston, Campaign of 1776, p. 208.

BATTLE OF LONG ISLAND, AUGUST 27, 1776. RETREAT OF AMERICANS UNDER LORD STIRLING ACROSS GOWANUS CREEK

Engraving by James Smillie after the painting by Alonzo Chappel

Stirling and Gen.l Sullavan and Several Brigadier generals and between 9 and 10 thousand soldiers were taken prisoner [1] the remaining of our army on Long Island retreated and pitched on the best and highest ground Just back of Brookling and intrenched themselves. Sudingly as well as they could the British army left flat Bush where the late and dreadful ilfated battle had been lately fought and were planting themselves alongside our troops in order Soon to give the finishing Stroke to Washington's army. *Samuel the Fifer*

But shortly after I do not remember how many days a most wonderful thunderstorm took place [2] it commenced about 1 O'clock in the day the thunder and the lighting was dreadful the clouds were so low that they seemed to break over the houses and the water run in rivers the darkness was so graat that the 2 armies could not see each other altho within 100 rods of each other thro' the whole of that stormy afternoon they were crossing as fast as possible [3] but

[1] Our entire force! This statement simply reflects the panic and the exaggerated reports current at the time.

[2] "A Northeaster set in and the afternoon [of the 28th] was one of extreme discomfort and trial." "Wind and rain incessant."

Henry B. Carrington, Battles of American Revolution, p. 213.

[3] Not until early on the 29th are there any extant orders for procuring boats for retreat, though Samuel tells us he responded to a call for volunteers issued during the battle. So far as we know, the embarkation of our troops began at nine P.M. and continued until midnight of the 29th. Samuel's later statements are in accord with this.

E. M. Avery remarks in his History of the United States: "It is probable that orders had been previously issued to provide transportation for the retreat if one became necessary."

Samuel the Fifer

they themselves did no that they were retreating they came over to get a little rest and we to go over and take their places the Sergeant Major told us that Col. Lewis told him we must be prepared to go over the next morning in 1 hour after the Sergeant Major come to Capt. Tomlinson's Qrs. and marched us all forth to march up to the Grand parade in order to pass a review and take further orders the storm began at 1 and it was now 5 O'clock it now rained but not so bad the Co. could not turn out a Mr. Othniel French a nice and good man a friend and neighbor to my father he says to me the men will not turn out [1] Samuel you are a minute man will you turn out with me and go up to the Grand parade and see what is going to be done I says yes Mr. French I will go with you

There was a few in othere Companies belonging to Col. Lewis' Regt. fell in and we were marched up to the grand parade and we found 3 or 4 hundred men there was an officer there who says to us Come on my brave boys I am glad you are not afraid of a few drops of water. by this time the rain had Subsided it appeared to be turned into mist and fog a picket Guard is to be set tonight a little this side Bunker Hill on the bowery [2] Mr. French says to me again Sam.l keep

[1] *À propos* of Samuel's ironical comments on the valor of his comrades, see Trevelyan's lively account of the informal state of discipline in the American army. The American Revolution, vol. 1, part 2, pp. 181–208.

[2] "'Bunker Hill' at New York has been described in a London Magazine of 1781, saying it was so called by the Americans; it being in the revolution, three quarters of a mile out of town; a hill with a fort upon it." John F. Watson, Annals of New York City and State, p. 327.

"There was a very high hill, once called 'Bayard's

close to me I will Sir and we marched on and we come to the house where the picket was to be kept and the Sergeant began to distribute the centinels Mr. French Says to the Sergeant I wish you would be so good as to let this young lad stand next to me for there is none that either of us are aiquanted with and the Sergeant placed me close to the Guard house and Mr. French next I found out the whole of the 3 or 4 hundred men who marched with us was to form a line of centries from the North river to the East river once in 40 feet as soon as the centries were Set an officer on horseback he rid close to me and says to me let no man pass you this night take no countersign nor watchword if any man come to you See that he is put under guard you must keep Station here till morning there was no man thro the night the fog thickened and all was Silent as Death *Samuel the Fifer*

at about 12 O'clock and so on the dogs began to bark the cattle to low the indians to howl and yell all these noises was from Long Island by reason of the thick and heavy fog and all the other dense qualities which conspired to tune the air like an organ we Supposed that the barking of the dogs and the lowing of the cattle and the howting and yeling of the indians was 2 miles from us it was said afterwards that perhaps there were 3 or 4 hndred indians attached to our army on Long Island they made as much noise as the yelling of 1000 under other circumstances. it was said that the indians was set to yelling that night

Mount' on which the Americans built a fort, and called it Bunker Hill, in the time of the revolution, now cut down. It stood on present Grand Street a little east of Centre Market." Ibid., p. 176.

Samuel the Fifer by the counsel of Gen.l Putnam about day the noise was all Still and about Sun an hour high the fog began to go off at this instant a man in the appearance of an officer came up to the Guard house one of the officers asked him where he was from he replyed from Long Island Sir what's the word from there our army has all come aff the night past the officer says Jentlemen this man ought to be put under guard the Jentleman who had just come up said you can put me under Guard if you please Sir but I presume that in less than 40 minutes you will find what I tell you is true the officer of the Guard now says Jentlemen if this is true we shall be all Sacrificed what can hinder the whole british Army now on Long Island flushed on conquest 4000 or 40,000 can march there way up the Island till they get opposite to Kingsbridge in 4 hours And these fleets can send there the boats wich we see there cross there away from Stattan Island to Long Island in as short a time

by this time Mr. French and I began to think about hunting up our couragious comrades and to learn whether they had kept themselves dry through the Storm I have but a confused reccollection of what passed after this Scene all bussed and preparations for retreat out of the City as soon as possible Mr French and I after the fatigue of the stormy day and standing Centry all night in our wet cloaths was quite sick and preparations was to leave the City next morning and he saw a man with a wagon that night from New Katchel and he hired him to carry us both to his house[1]

[1] Washington is quoted as follows: "Great numbers [of the militia] have gone off, in some instances almost by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies at a time."

Samuel the Fifer

we got our pass and went on and Stoped and recruted and went on as I could I reached home the last of Sept. and soon listed under Lieut Burr [1] of Old Fairfield into the Black Rock battery Service 3 months and of the Draft last of September 1776 according to the best of my memory for 1 year Black Rock battery lay on the top of a rock alongside of a narrow and crooked channel environed on avery side with rocks which made it dangerous for vessels unaiquanted with the channel to enter I cannot remember how many cannon was placed on the platform I think 6 or 8 it belonged to the town of Fairfield and lay about half a mild East of the Courthouse and Jail I believe the Fortyfication was kept up till piece I have forgotten how many men was Supported for its Defense whether 30 or 40 I cannot tell

There was no particular occurrence took place of notice until about the close of the year 1776 on the last of December Col. Abel [2] a Patriot and prominent character in the Town and County early in the morning he sent his waiter a coulared man by the name of Bil molat with a message to Lieut Burr when molat

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Henry B. Carrington, Battles of American Revolution, p. 220.

On September 8th Washington reported the militia of Connecticut then with him "as reduced from six to two thousand men" and in a few days their number was but nominal, — twenty or thirty to some regiments.

Ibid., p. 221.

[1] Lieutenant Isaac Burr of the Connecticut militia.

[2] Presumably Major Elijah Abel of Fairfield, promoted Lieutenant-Colonel in May, 1782, 4th Regiment Conn. Militia (companies from Fairfield and Stratford).

Record of Connecticut Men in the Revolution, p. 433.

Samuel the Fifer had reached within perhaps 15 rods of the baraks he began to Shout and hollo *Huzza Huzza Huzza* and Jumpt up knocked his heels together and Shouted Col. Abel has news from Washington and he has taken the whole Hessian army Lieut Burr Holloed for Molat to come to the Barraks and when he came he presented a short brief Statement in print Stating that Washington agreeable to a preconcerted plan commenced his march at dark through rain and hail and slait on Xmas day evening he arrived at Trintan the next morning before daylight and as they had been holding chrismass frolics drove them out of there bunks and took them all prisoners thus the seting Sun of the dreadful Summer of 76 shed some rays of light on her horizon and was presageful of better days and the news flew swift throw the land in 3 days after that we had news that while 12000 British Soldiers was racing after Washington's whole army of less than 2000 While Lord Corn Wallise was in pursuit of Washington and his little army the British army halted on a hill and pitched there in encampment and [Washington] began to set fires at dark and left men enough to recrute them with rails through the night[1] and continued his march with his little army of less than 2000 20 miles reached princetown college in a dark foggy morning where there were 3 Regt. s of British Regulars encamped, and them he made prisoners and the 5th

[1] "All night long the American camp-fires were kept burning brightly, and small parties were busily engaged in throwing up intrenchments . . . near the Assumpink . . . While this was going on, the whole American army marched swiftly up the south bank . . . passed around Cornwallis's left wing to his rear, and gained the road to Princeton."
John Fiske, American Revolution, vol. 1, p. 233.

day after at night were marched to Old Fairfield under a guard of Major Joseph Hoyt the next morning Col. Abel sent a written request by his Waiter bil Molat for Lieut. Burr to send 2 of his men to come to town and take Charge of 2 of the Prisoners Major Hoyt had left behind and go on with them to Hartford the place of their Destination as Major Hoyt had but a small guard with him Lieut. Burr says John Parent and Sam. l De Forest be you willing to go on to Hartford with the Prisoners we both answered we were went over to town at once Col. Abel committed them to our Charge Major Hoyt had been gone about 2 hours one of the prisoner's name was Birk Sergeant Birk a smart intelligent likely young man I do not remember the others name this was an interesting and Joyous Scene when Contrasted with the dreadful Scenes which flashed in our eye and Stoned our ears in New York *Samuel the Fifer*

The recks of 3 British Reg. ts of Prisoners had just passed the doors of a people whose hearts palpitated with Joy and would come into the Streets to meet us with greetings of grateful Salutations to heaven for Such an unexpected deliverance as we passed through old Stratford and Milford Jentleman yea and men of every grade would almost block up the path we travelled Major Hoyt and his prisoners were billeted among the citizens the same as they had been in Fairfield this was in New Haven John Parent and I was taken to Mr. Elias Reaves' where we were treated with all the kind civilities we could wish this was the happiest enterprise I was engaged in we reached Wallingford the next day we reached the pretty litle city of Middletown the next day the fourth and last day we are at Hartford before I dismiss this subject I will

Samuel the Fifer

relate a little short narrative give us on our way fron Fairfield to New Haven Sergent Berk said[1] after Genl. Washington had made such a Suding and Successful assault in taking 3 or 4 Reg.ts of Hessians at Trintan and as many as 12000 of their best troops was in full pursuit of him and it was thought they would most assuredly get hold of him and the last accounts was the army had come up with him when we were taken it was a warm very foggy morning

we had eaten our breakfast and were in the college yard Striped with our coats and hats off playing ball and as to having any fear about an army we felt as Safe as if we had been in the kingdon of heaven but at once we heard the sound of men's feet traming and I Stooped down and looked under the fog and I could see there legs as high as there hips not more than 6 rods from us not a moment was left to look for our coats and hats I run for the parc of bares [pair of bars?] they were pretty high I sprung and threw my breast across the top rail at that instant a ball from a field piece[2] struck in the middle of the rail I was at one end

[1] This incident will illustrate the entire absence of animosity between the soldiers on the two sides during the Revolutionary War, a fact which is emphasized in Sir George Trevelyan's The American Revolution.

[2] "In the college buildings at Princeton (which, with the Presbyterian church, had been used for barracks by the Enemy) there remained a portion of a regiment. Washington drew up some cannon within a short distance of these buildings, and commenced firing upon them. The first ball, it is said, entered the prayer hall, a room used as a chapel, and passed through the head of a portrait of George the Second, suspended in a large frame upon the wall. After a few discharges, Captain James Moore, of the Princeton militia, burst open a door of Nassau Hall, and demanded the

"COLLEGE YARD," PRINCETON, 1764, AS IT WAS WHEN THE BATTLE OF PRINCETON TOOK PLACE, JANUARY 3, 1777

Engraving by H. Dawkins after the painting by W. Tennant

Samuel the Fifer

and an othere man at the othere end of the rail the ball took the rail in two in the middle and I was cast to the ground Swift and gave me Such a Jare I thought myself mortally wounded and to sum it up you see we are all prisoners

The events of two weeks appears to have rolled on a pivot which has sealed and gave a Stamp to the destiny of america

Washington's 100,000 men who was destroyed on Long Island at the storming of Fort Washington and Fort Lee at the White Plains and finally were chased and hunted through the Jerseys until they were melted away to nothing

(Signed) Samue D Forest

During the long war Connecticut was known as the "provision state" because of the vast stores which she sent for the relief of the army. When, in the cruel winter at Valley Forge, Washington wrote that he must disband the army unless he received immediate and ample supplies, Connecticut's response was the forwarding of large droves of live cattle. She gave without stint, both of provisions and men.

In Stratford Township, when it became necessary to induce more enlistments by offering bounties, as much as "ten pounds lawful silver money, or gold,

surrender of the troops within. They instantly complied, and, with several invalids, were made prisoners."

Benson J. Lossing, Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, p. 237.

or provisions equivalent" was offered to every "effective" man who would enlist in the Continental Army for six months, and if he would enlist for the term of the war, he was to receive six pounds annually in addition. Ten pounds in those days was a large sum, and to pay these bounties the different towns had to tax themselves and toward the latter part of the war had even to borrow the money. In this service of collecting funds, provisions, or clothing and distributing them, Nehemiah de Forest and other prominent men of Stratford Township were very active.

Stratford did not actually suffer from incursions of the enemy, the attacks on Danbury and New Haven and the burning of Fairfield — when Samuel the Fifer was present — being the nearest instances of real warfare. There were a number of British plundering raids, however, of one kind and another, as, for instance, the arrival of a party of British soldiers from Lloyd's Neck, Long Island, who robbed a lonely house near Stratford of everything that they could carry away, including all the stores for the winter and even the bedclothes which had covered the sleeping family when the marauders arrived. The daughter of the house, little Phoebe Lewis, had just finished her first stint of spinning, and her large hank of wool yarn had been dyed a beautiful blue and was ready for weaving. This hank, tossed by a soldier on the heap of plunder, rolled down till it

came just within reach of little Phoebe, lying coverless on her trundle bed. As the soldier turned his back for an instant, the child reached out and drew her beloved yarn into the bed and lay on it, and that yarn, as the story says, was the only thing that was saved from the foragers. After the soldiers had stripped the house, they left in their boats, as they had come, and tradition tells us, alas, that they were guided in their raid by a Tory de Forest!

This is a good illustration of the way Stratford families were often divided as to allegiance, brothers sometimes belonging to opposite parties. In fact, there was an example of this very kind in the de Forest family. In the early war times, the time of the French and Indian War, two sons of David of Wilton, Elihu and Ephraim, gave excellent service for two years in Canada. When, however, the Revolutionary War began, the brothers were divided. Elihu gave his share of service in the Continental Army but Ephraim chose the other side. He had married a wife in Redding and had gone there to live, and being away from the influence of the rest of the family, he remained "loyal to the crown." He became an ardent member of a Loyalist Association and his property was finally confiscated by regular court proceedings because of his Toryism.

Such raids as the one spoken of above were not the only trials from which Stratford suffered. Situated so conveniently near the Sound, it was almost im-

possible to prevent a considerable amount of trading with the enemy. Whigs as well as Tories were involved in this nefarious business, and it was so profitable that finally almost everyone who owned a boat, especially a fast one, was engaged in it. In 1782 the trade had become so outrageous that thirty inspectors were appointed, Nehemiah of New Stratford among others, "to assist in putting a stop to the illicit and unlawful trade with the enemy."

It is, however, a fact that Washington employed several Stratford boatmen as spies and that through their trading expeditions to New York they gained for him much valuable information. These men after the war showed their commissions from the government and received pensions. We have already heard that Gideon at the very end of the war enlisted in "whale-boat service" under Captain John Barlow. It is not improbable that this may have been such service as has just been alluded to and that Captain Barlow may have been so employed by Washington.

The patriots of Connecticut had their patience sorely tried by the local Tories, and many of the latter were made to suffer in one way or another for their convictions. At one time Stratford passed an act reading, "No inimical person now with the enemy shall return and reside in the town," and after that all Tory non-combatants learned to pay their fines when necessary and hold their tongues.

One Tory who had acted as host for the British General, Tryon, leader of the raid upon Danbury, was visited by a party of young Whigs, who "carried him a short distance, to a stream of water, and gave him what they called a thorough 'ducking.' They used him the greater part of the night, and in that time immersed him as frequently as they deemed profitable. He was ever afterwards a worthy citizen."[1]

On the other hand, the Rev. David Ely of Ripton was told by one of these British loyalists that "when the rebellion was put down, the Doctor should be hung on an oak tree, standing on the public square, near the meeting house in which he preached."[2] What a use for the old oak tree under the shade of which Samuel and Abigail and their children had been wont to take their Sunday "nooning"!

The names of other Connecticut de Forests than those already given are to be found in the Revolutionary records.[3] There fought in the war an ANTHONY DE FOREST, who must have been a son of Anthony and Martha de Forest of Stamford *Anthony*

[1] Hinman, R. R. War of the American Revolution, p. 140.

[2] Orcutt, Rev. Samuel. History of Stratford and Bridgeport, p. 998.

[3] See also Appendix, pp. 317 ff. where all the available records of the military service of the descendants of David de Forest of Stratford are gathered together.

and the brother of Reuben and Ebenezer, already mentioned, and a GEORGE DE FOREST, the son of John de Forest and Huldah Nichols of Danbury. His brothers, JOHN, WILLIAM, and ARCHIBALD, are said to have served seven years each.

George

John
William
Archibald

The twenty-five of whom sketches more or less slight have been included here were probably all grandsons or great-grandsons of David de Forest of Stratford. Their story forms an honorable record for the Huguenot family which had ever been ready to do battle for religious or political freedom.

VIII

NEHEMIAH DE FOREST

The Innkeeper

NEHEMIAH, as we have seen, was born on Moose Hill January 24, 1743, and there he passed his childhood in his father's house. His Uncle Henry lived near-by on the same hill, and his Uncle Benjamin a little way below in Ripton. Each of them had large families, in all eleven children, some of them about the same ages as Nehemiah's brothers and sisters. We can imagine what a good time this troop of young de Forests had together. One of Benjamin's sons was named Nehemiah; and as he was only five years younger than our young friend Nehemiah and lived for some time in the same parish, great must have been the confusion. A family tradition says that all these cousins loved to congregate in Uncle Henry's house. *Moose Hill*

This is all that we know about Nehemiah until April 10, 1767. On that date, when he was twenty-four years old, his father gave him as "part of his portion" fifteen acres of land. This belonged to Samuel's own farm and adjoined land which he had already given to his eldest son, Joseph — very likely on the occasion of the latter's marriage in 1757.

Moose Hill

When the land was given to Nehemiah, he probably tried farming on his own account, but by the time two years had passed, there were other reasons why he needed a farm of his own. He had found his sweet Mary and he wanted to marry.

Mary Lockwood (born August 31, 1745) was the daughter of Deacon Peter Lockwood of Norwalk, Connecticut — an eminent man in the colony and many times a representative from Norwalk to the General Assembly. He was a descendant of that Robert Lockwood whose name first appears in 1635 in the annals of Watertown, Connecticut, and who ten years later established himself in Fairfield County and became the progenitor of a numerous and highly respected line of descendants, who settled largely in that county.

Mary's mother was Abigail, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Hawley of Ridgefield, Connecticut, but she died before Mary was four years old. The child, however, was not long without a mother, for her father, six months later, married again, as was usual in those days; and when the time came that Mary in turn wished to marry, it was Hannah Fitch, the third of Peter Lockwood's "desirable wives," who was at the head of his home.

Peter and his wife were members of Wilton Parish, Norwalk, the parish which was so largely peopled by the descendants of David de Forest of Wilton, and it was probably on some occasion when Nehemiah

went there to visit his cousins that he met his Mary. *Moose Hill*

On December 20, 1769, therefore, the young minister, the Rev. Isaac Lewis of Wilton Parish, was called upon, and Nehemiah de Forest and Mary Lockwood were married. The household on Moose Hill to which Nehemiah brought his bride was a small one, as has already been explained. We have heard, too, in the chapter describing the division of Samuel's homestead on Moose Hill that in addition to the fifteen acres just mentioned Samuel had in April, 1769, given Nehemiah yet other fifteen acres of land and half of his own dwelling-house and barn; these also were to be considered part of Nehemiah's portion. This Samuel did in order to enable his son to bring his bride to a home of her own. Here the young people lived very happily with Samuel and Abigail for the next few years.

At about the time of Nehemiah's marriage, the burning question on Moose Hill was that of erecting a fine new meeting-house in New Stratford. Of course the history of the meeting-house and of the coming of the Rev. Elisha Rexford belongs chronologically at the end of the chapter which tells of Samuel. But these events were so much more closely connected with Nehemiah's family life in New Stratford that it has seemed more natural to tell of them in the present chapter, even if it should involve a certain amount of recapitulation.

Moose Hill

Before 1770 Samuel and Abigail, with their sons Joseph and Nehemiah and the grandchildren, had, as we know, climbed the hill every Sabbath and attended service in the "barn like building" in New Stratford. The new parish was established in 1762, and the first meeting of the Society took place on June 21st, when it was voted that "the old house erected for winter preaching shall be ye place to attend publick worship till a more convenient place be provided." The records show that the actual founding of the Congregational church did not take place until 1764 and that twenty-six days afterward the Rev. Elisha Rexford was installed as minister. He was a graduate of Yale and was forty-three years of age when he came to New Stratford. While there he kept "a select school for both sexes" and was much beloved and respected by his people, whom he served for forty-four years, until the time of his death in 1808.[1]

In anticipation of Mr. Rexford's coming the congregation had made great efforts to "erect a new meeting house," but apparently nothing was accomplished, probably because the small congregation could not raise money enough. To salve their consciences, they did what they could and provided a "Cushing for ye Pulpit." Thus their new pastor would at any rate sit at ease, unless, indeed, the

[1] Portraits of Mr. Rexford and his wife still hang in the little Congregational parsonage in Monroe.

"cushing" was simply one on which the Bible was to be laid![1] *Moose Hill*

There must have been a very grand ordination; that is, as grand as the simple settlers could make it. Let us hope that the feast which always accompanied such a ceremony was convivial, but there was surely no necessity for the congregation's being so addicted to drinking as was the one at Beverly, Massachusetts, at an ordination feast of about this period. The following items were then charged on the innkeeper's bill:—

	£.	sh.	d.
30 Bowles of Punch before the People went to meeting	3		
80 people eating in the morning at 16 d	6		
10 bottles of wine before they went to meeting	1	10	
68 dinners at 3s.	10	4	
44 bowles of punch while at dinner	4	8	
18 bottles of wine	2	14	
8 bowles of Brandy	1	2	
Cherry Rum	1	10	
6 people drank tea			

Although the Congregational church had been founded in 1764 and although it was definitely decided during the winter of 1768 that a meeting-

[1] In other parishes there were like disappointments. The church members in the adjacent parish of Trumbull, after collecting money for a silver "Christening Bason," found themselves obliged to vote that part of the money be used to cover the pulpit cushion and that they be satisfied with a "blocktin Bason."

Moose Hill house should be constructed, the Society had been very slow about beginning the work and it was not until June 21–22, 1769, that the frame was raised. It was built upon land which is now called the Green, and the directions given for its construction were almost as elaborate as those for the erection of Solomon's Temple. There was to be a stone foundation; the roof was to be covered "on both sides with three foot seder shingles," the sides with oak clapboards; the window frames were to be of chestnut. Later, the window timbers were cased and still later it was voted to add a steeple and a bell. To pay for all this the inhabitants voted to "tax themselves four pence on the capital list given in ye year 1767, for ye purpose of Giting lumber."

In 1769 the meeting-house was finished, and it was in April, 1770, four months after Nehemiah's marriage, that Samuel and his sons made the final and successful appeal to be "set off from Ripton to New Stratford parish." Nehemiah and Mary undoubtedly became members of the society in 1770, but owing to the incomplete state of the church records, we do not find their names on the list until 1774.

Mr. Rexford kept his church notes carefully and accurately, but after his death in 1808, his wife and daughter removed to Stratford, taking with them all the church notes as well as his manuscripts. Then, alas, after keeping them until 1825, or later, Miss

Rexford used them for waste paper! The chronicles of the church of New Stratford are, therefore, very incomplete. The books which contain the minutes of the society meetings from 1762 to 1812 are in existence, and so are a few loose leaves containing various items, but the early church records, those which contained all entries of baptisms, marriages, deaths, admissions to membership, dismissals, and church business have been destroyed! *Moose Hill*

The Land Records, however, have not been lost, and from them we know that Nehemiah followed his father's example and began early to invest in land, the first recorded purchase being in March, 1775, when he bought three acres and seven rods of land at a spot called "Brushy Ring," just south of the New Stratford meeting-house. This was on the very top of the hill — the place where "New Stratford Centre" was to be located a little later.

A year afterward he bought from his brother-in law, Elisha Mills, the adjoining land, seven acres, with a dwelling-house on it. An important purchase this, for the dwelling-house was to be the home of Nehemiah and Mary for the next twenty-two years, and in it Nehemiah started in 1776 on a new career — that of innkeeper. *New Stratford*

Nehemiah was not the first of his family to go tc New Stratford. Samuel Lewis (son of Benjamin Lewis, Jr., and Sarah de Forest, and therefore Nehemiah's first cousin) had moved with his family

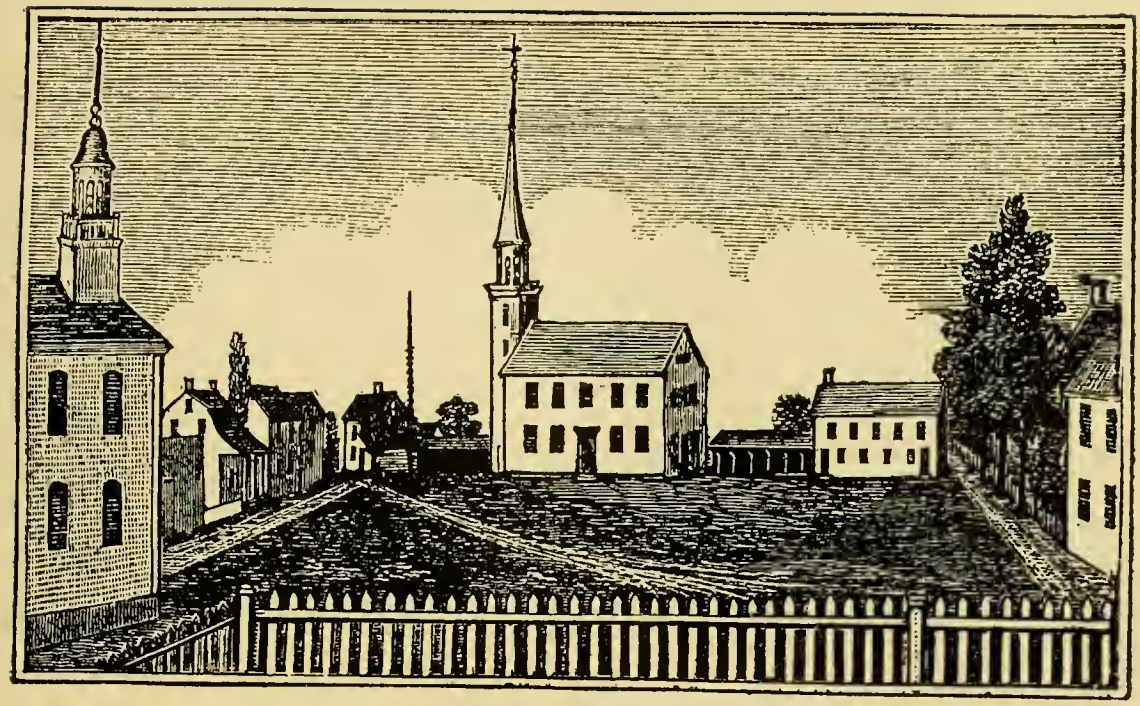
New Stratford

to the top of the hill in 1755 and had located his house on a plot which afterward became the northwest corner of the Green. He may have suggested to Nehemiah that there was need for a tavern in New Stratford and may even have told him that an appropriate house was available.

The house was well adapted to its purpose. Indeed, it is possible that it had been built for an inn. The outside was covered with shingles, and the slanting gambrel roof spread out in front over what we should call the piazza but what was then called the "front shed," which ran the entire length of the house.[1] Like Hepzibah's, it was a plank house, the two-inch planks being set on end and the cracks between filled in with mortar. It was two stories high and had plenty of upstairs rooms, on the inside of which the beams showed. Only one bedroom was plastered, and tradition still tells of the bitter coldness of those rooms in winter.

A hall ran through the middle of the house; on either side were large rooms, and back of these were the dining-room and kitchen. The northeast room was the parlor, then called the "front room." One entire side of this room was paneled from floor to ceiling, and in the middle of the paneling was the great fireplace, surrounded by beautiful blue-and-

[1] In the accompanying picture the house is to be seen (very small in scale) on the left of the Green and overtopped by a tall poplar tree.



SOUTH VIEW OF THE CENTRAL PART OF MONROE

From Barber's "Historical Collections of Connecticut," 1836

white tiles, undoubtedly brought from Holland, and showing scriptural subjects. In the woodwork on either side of the fireplace was a narrow china cupboard with a panelled door and a rounded top, and in the north corner of the room was a doorway leading down by several steps to Mary's garden. *New Stratford*

The large room on the left of the front door, with its sanded floor and big fireplace, was the tap-room. Here the men of the village met to discuss the news and drink their mugs of beer, to smoke their pipes, and play backgammon, for there was a craze for this game in the early New England tavern days. It must not be imagined, though, that many other games were tolerated. "Dice, Cards, Tables, Quoits, Loggets, Bowls, Ninepins, and Billiards" were all "unlawful games," and the landlord was forbidden to allow them in his house, yard, or garden.

There were many other rules to govern the old time publican. He was not permitted to have any persons in his house except the members of his family from Saturday at dusk until after "Sabbath Day and the evening after the Sabbath," or after nine o'clock on any other night, nor was he to allow "inhabitants to sit drinking in his house above the space of one hour at a time." He was also forbidden to "willingly Harbor . . . any Rogues, Vagabonds, Thieves, nor any other notorious offenders," though why any decent tavern-keeper should wish to do so,

New Stratford

is not quite understandable. Such rules as these the landlord was obliged to obey "whether or no," to use an old New England idiom.

After the purchase of the dwelling-house, Nehemiah immediately bought from his neighbor, Nathan Wheeler, of whom we shall hear more soon, "bricks, ribs [that is, studs], and shingles," and began to build an addition at the northern end. This new wing was to be used as a store and was the first one in New Stratford, as previous to this time all trade had gone to Ripton.

The village green was a good place on which to locate a store, for it was the culminating point of a number of highways. A road from New Haven crossed the hilltop, as did the road from Norwalk, and the highway of cross-country travel between Stratford and Newtown also intersected the plot. These roads cut the Green at various angles, and the meeting-house and inn made further inroads upon its area; but before long the meeting-house was moved to the north, the inn to the west, and the roads were so straightened as to leave a square green, which was for many years enclosed.

There was every reason why a store connected with an inn or tavern should do a good business. Since the inn was also the mail station, where all the neighbors naturally collected when a mail arrived, it was in those days the busiest spot in the village. In the old almanacs distances were not given from

town to town but from tavern to tavern, and the "Post-rider" with the mail in his saddle-bags always stayed at these and distributed local news as well as letters. Post-riders could evidently choose the places at which they stopped and the time; for old Mr. Carpenter, the New Stratford letter-carrier, used to say that *he* stopped for dinner wherever he smelled doughnuts frying. *New Stratford*

The year 1776 found Landlord de Forest established in his unaccustomed position as innkeeper in a new and progressive village, and an innkeeper in those days was a man of no mean importance. He had to be "recommended by the Selectmen and civil authorities, constables and grand jurors of the town" in which he resided. No man held himself too high for the position and indeed no one in the place was much more important, the tavern-keeper being often appointed a representative to the General Assembly. All notices of new laws, town meetings, auctions, etc., were posted in the inn; and as news came chiefly through word of mouth and not through print, who could be so well informed of all that occurred in the colony as the landlord, whose business it was to meet and to know everyone?

Of the inns themselves one traveller wrote: "You meet with neatness, dignity and decency, the chambers neat, the beds good, the sheets clean, supper passable, cyder tea punch and all for fourteen pence a head." Lafayette told his wife that "Host and

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hostess sit at the table with you and do the honors of a comfortable meal."

Nehemiah was energetic and capable, and before the first year was over he was actively interested in all public affairs. He was made a member of the school committee, on which he served for many years, performing the arduous duty of collecting the school monies and distributing them to the schools in the proper proportion.

His relations were much the same with the ecclesiastical society committee, on which we frequently find his name, as well as that of his brother-in-law, Milton Hawley. He was often appointed "Moderator" of the committee meetings; these were ordinarily held at the meeting-house, but when the weather was severe, the members used to adjourn to his house, where they could be warm and comfortable. Particularly was Nehemiah called upon when money was to be raised. Whether it was for the "minister's rates" or for the "purchase of a bell by signment" (subscription) or for the expenses of the parish representative at the General Assembly or for a subscription to aid in rebuilding "Old Stratford Meeting House" (which was destroyed by lightning in 1785), it was always Nehemiah de Forest who was made collector.

He was appointed register of the Society, surveyor of highways, fence viewer, "Kee Keeper of the Pound," and also held many other offices. *À propos*

of the office of key keeper of the pound, it is rather amusing to note the expenses incurred when a certain colt was impounded and, no owner appearing, was sold by the village constable at the New Stratford sign post. The bill of damages came to eighteen shillings, the selling cost twelve shillings, the fence viewer received three shillings, and the key keeper eight shillings eight pence — £2. 1. 8 in all. *New Stratford*

Thus Nehemiah, like his father and grandfather before him, became a highly respected member of the community. His domestic life, too, reflected the peaceful dignity which was so characteristic of the early New Englander's home. That he was fortunate in his gentle wife, Mary Lockwood, is proved by all we know of her, particularly by two lovely letters written to her by her father and by Mary's comment upon one of them. Shortly before Mary removed to the hilltop she had the great grief of losing her father, but his letters survive to speak of the tender love between these two and to hint at the playfulness and gentle humor, which, mistakenly perhaps, we are not apt to associate with the New England settlers. The letters were written by Deacon Peter soon after his daughter's marriage.

Peter Lockwood, Norwalk, Conn., to Mr. Nehemiah Deforest, at Ripton.

June 14th, 1770.

New Stratford Loving Children,

I receved my Daughter's of ye 8th Inst. which Breatheth so much Love and Duty as made me Weep and Lafe. I wept to think I came so much short of what was my Duty as a father and a Christian. My tender affection wont let me think your speech flatterey. Ye Contentment and Satisfaction you shew makes me more than an Amends.

I Rejoyce to hear you Ask my Prayers that you may have Infinitely Better and More Durable Riches In and through Christ. Then God will be your father In a good sence, which that I should Neglect to pray for, God forBid. . . . It is ye Christian that Injoys a happiness that a Strainger Intermeddels not with. It Rejoyces My hart that you are in a Religious family and meat with so much kindness.

Tho you are settled at a Distance I Rejoyce in hopes of seeing you offen and Reseveing your kind Letters and of wrighting to you. I Spent Sum of my Solatory Ours ye Night before I Reseved yours in wrighting to you But on Reseveing of yours, that scrawl you wont see. Do not think it a trouble nor shall not, I hope, while my trembling hand and pen can Do it. I Cant but Rejoyce in My Afliction when I see ye Affection you Express . . . and that you All, who are ye Children of my two Desirerable wives have so Much kindness for Each other. . . .

O I had Like to forgot to tell you what it was that Made Me Lafe it was that you had not forgot that

Clams was my favourite Dish. But I Beleve you will be as weary of Reading as I am of writeing so End with these Lines, send you tenderest Love and Regards to Each of you and your parents and all friends, these from your Very Affectionate father — Peter Lockwood. *New Stratford*

July 16 . . . We Expected you hear Last week and Hannah Came Down and her Children to see you and you Doe not know how much she was dissapointed. But I will tell you more, with the Leave of Providence I Desine to Come and see you Saterday after next.

Peter Lockwood, Norwalk, to Mrs. Mary DeForest, W. Stratford.

July ye 1, 1771.

Loving Daughter,

I Received yours of June 26, of what year you Doe not tell me. You will take it kindly of A father to put you In mind of it for your Amendment to others, not to Discorridge you from writing to me for you Doe not know how I was pleased Last Night when Alone to reade your Letter and Alone I am as Like to be as when you was hear.

Sarah Raymond is Sarah still, seemed A Mind to Come and as Glad to go away in a week and set off and is gone to Suffield. I have now got Elizabeth Crofut and I hope She will do well.

I Rejoyce to heare you are all well, if your Spouse hath ben Unwell and is well again be ye thankfull, as to your Swellen on your Neck I am harttily greaved for you and k[n]ow not what to Say, to goe to Cuting there I should be as you say afraid. I Must Commit

New Stratford you and all I have and am in to ye hands of ye God of My Life. My Dear Child, some Other Deseses may take you away and not that, Pray secure an Interest In Christ and a title in that world where Sin and Every Desese will be k[n]own no more.

As for Byeing ye [slave] woman, you will Do as your Spouse and funds think Best. If I had one so good as you call her I should call [her] worth more than fourty Pounds.

I am glad you have Sold your horse so well if you have not jocked ye Man. If Mr. Deforests trading turneth all out so you may get Rich I hope you will remember ye Advice of ye wise man if Riches Increse Set not your Hart on them, ye World is a Vain thing, Money we see A goeing.

Dolly Says she cannot write now I hope She will Soon, I would have you all write to one another as Offen as you can . . . So remain your Loving tho Very Unworthy father

PETER LOCKWOOD.

P.S. It is ye Best and all ye Paper I have, I have no Shop to step in to Get Better. If I had I would. I would have Mr. Deforest know I do not Like it Very Well his not Calling going nor Comming when he went to York.

Mary, coming across this letter years later, sent it to her husband, with the following inscription in her handwriting on the back of it.

Asking pardon with Submission Let me intret you to read this. I come across it, I read it with pleashur and with pain; it brought his conversation, his person,

gentel way of reproof, so fresh it seemd as if he was spekeing to me fase to fase, & may we both remember the tender consarn our parents had for us, for our Soles, [may] the many prayers and caushuns they have given us li with wait [weight] on our minds, and let us now in obedience to gods commands, in gratatude to our parents now they are dead and gone, and the Love we ought to have for our one Soles, quickken us to make our Coling and election sure. *New Stratford*

Dear friend ackcept this from my hand, If you cant have it from my mouth. I desiar to bless god he gives me a hart to pray for you and my children and would beg the same from you and let us be helpmets to ech other. I am a poor exsampel, dont think my Self perfect, I [as]sure you my heart is much affected.

Only a year after the death of Mary's father, Nehemiah lost his mother, Abigail, in whose house he and Mary had just ended the first seven happy years of their married life, and as if this were not loss enough, but six months later Samuel also died. This was truly a period of sorrow for Nehemiah; for his brother Joseph, whose house on Moose Hill had been next to Samuel's, died at about the same time as did their father, and their uncle, Henry de Forest, also passed away.

Neither Samuel nor Abigail was buried by their old pastor, who had baptized so many of their children and who had been their faithful friend since their venturesome move in 1734 into the backwoods. The Rev. Jedediah Mills had gone to his rest in 1776,

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a few months before Abigail. He was then nearly eighty years old.

Nehemiah did not receive much additional wealth through the will of either his father or his mother, as he had already received his portion; and Mary's share of her father's estate was only one tenth of it and could not, therefore, have amounted to any very large sum. Perhaps Nehemiah turned all the more readily to innkeeping after he knew that his fortunes as farmer and landowner would not be likely to improve materially.

Before he moved his family in 1776 to New Stratford, three children had been born to Mary — Abby, 1771; William, 1773; and Lockwood, 1775. To the youngest Mary gave her family name, as he was born at about the time of her father's death.

We can imagine Mary during her spare time on the Sabbath Day, if, indeed, there were any spare time, sitting with her children in her "front room" before the big fireplace and telling them stories suggested by those wonderful Dutch tiles. There were no picture books for children then, only the big illustrated Bibles and possibly Fox's Book of Martyrs, so that the tiles were a never-ending source of delight and inspiration, and the children learned to know all about Adam and Eve and their adventures with the serpent, about Moses in his perilous voyage among the bulrushes, about little Samuel,

and the Christ child in the manger. Sweet mother Mary with her flock about her; for a new little one was added every other year until Mary had seven lambs in that peaceful fold. *New Stratford*

Of all the public interests of Nehemiah de Forest's active life, the most important must unquestionably have been the Revolutionary War. By the time the inn at New Stratford had opened its doors, with Nehemiah in the character of host, the early period of political uncertainty had passed and the colonies were committed to the necessity of fighting for their lives. Many had already adopted State Constitutions, although Connecticut was not yet of the number. The terrible winter of 1777 tested to the utmost the endurance of the emerging nation, and every effort was made to win recruits and to provide for the army already in the field.

Nehemiah did not enlist; he was needed to manage the inn, and besides that, he undoubtedly felt that he could be more useful in the military affairs of Stratford Township and New Stratford Parish if he remained at home, but he was an active and zealous patriot during the whole war. The same can be said of his brother David, who lived in Derby down on the Housatonic; also of Elisha Mills of Ripton, and of Nehemiah's neighbor, Nathan Wheeler of New Stratford. We find Nehemiah's name among those on the first "Committee of In-

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spection"[1] appointed in 1776, part of whose duty it was to keep "watch and ward" in the town.

We have already seen how important was Connecticut's function as the "Provision State" and how freely she taxed herself to care for the needy soldiers. In 1777 Nehemiah was one of those appointed "to provide immediately all those necessaries for the said soldiers, as the law directs," and the same year was on a committee of six "to receive all such necessary provisions which the people are disposed to bring for the support of ye soldiers families as wheat and all other articles according to ye late law for regulating prices," the same committee being expected to "issue forth distribute and provide for soldiers families according to law in such case made and provided." The duties of this committee in 1778 were "in behalf of this town to purchase and procure clothing etc. for ye Continental troops," and it was probably at this time that they sent "100 shirts, 100 pair of mittens, 100 pair of stockings & 100 pair of shoes for our soldiers belonging to this town who are now in the service in the Connecticut lines."

In 1781 he and five others were to "agree with and hire such able-bodied recruits as are still wanted to fill up the town quota on the best terms they are able and voted that a tax of three pence on the

[1] This information with much that follows was found in Rev. Samuel Orcutt's History of Stratford and Bridgeport.

ENGRAVING OF THE DUC DE LAUZUN

From Lossing's "Pictorial Field Book," vol. II, p. 308

pound be levied on the list of 1781 in hard money to pay the hire and expenses of raising said recruits." It was at this time that Nehemiah presumably "hired" his fifteen-year-old nephew Gideon, who then entered Brigadier-General Waterbury's Battalion. Still another committee of the same character to which he belonged had the same duties in 1782, when it was evidently even harder to raise recruits and also to collect the tax wherewith to pay them. *New Stratford*

During the summer of 1780 the colonists had been cheered by the arrival in Newport of the French fleet under the command of the Comte de Rochambeau, whose coming was the result of the alliance with France made earlier in the war. The following summer Rochambeau was summoned to join Washington on the Hudson, and with the main body of the French army he passed through Hartford and Newtown on his way to obey the summons. The Duc de Lauzun, one of the French officers and a very charming young fellow, with his Legion of Hussars, six hundred strong, formed a sort of guard to the main army and marched across Connecticut on a line about fifteen miles back from the Sound. He spent one night at New Haven, one at Derby, and then, after crossing the Housatonic, began to climb the hill toward New Stratford.

The way was long and steep, although the troops took the road around the base of Barn Hill in order

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to avoid a still steeper climb; but they finally entered New Stratford from the north, and there, across the Green, stood Nehemiah's inn waiting to receive as many as could be crowded under its hospitable roof.

We may be sure that every man, woman, and child was watching for the arrival of the soldiers, and when they emerged on the Green, was thrilled by the sight they presented. The hussars wore such brilliant uniforms — green and scarlet, it is said — and such impressive military caps, "Shakos" they were called, really wonderful, with standing cockades of black horsehair and hanging bands of gold galloon! Then there were clanking sabres! What a contrast to the appearance of the Connecticut militia, who often had no uniforms whatever or, at best, only a cocked hat!

The French officers were made comfortable in the inn, where De Lauzun must have been surprised as well as pleased to find a landlord of French descent to greet him, one who had, as was said of Nehemiah, "a natural ease and gentility of address and politeness of manner — matters which all Frenchmen if not all Americans regard." The soldiers encamped on a meadow a little to the southeast of the village green. There was not fodder enough in the place to feed all the horses and the "five-cattle teams" that had dragged the heavy supply wagons over the terrible corduroy roads — eight hundred

FRENCH HUSSAR, 1772

and ten such wagons, we are told, most of them drawn by two yoke of oxen and a horse. Everyone wished to help all he could, and so a meadow near-by was hastily mowed by moonlight to supply the deficiency. *New Stratford*

That evening there was great merriment in New Stratford, for a dance on the Green was organized. De Lauzun's military band furnished the music — and such music! In these bands there were usually "a flute, six clarinets, three bassoons, two horns, one trumpet and one serpent besides a number of side-drums." As the Continentals had only fifes and drums, no wonder that the music of the hussars caused great excitement wherever they went. Rochambeau himself wrote about it as follows: "Ce qui vous étonnera, c'est de retrouver toujours la gaîté française dans ces marches pénibles. Les Américains, que la curiosité amene par milliers dans nos camps, y sont reçus avec alegresse; on fait jouer pour eux nos instruments militaires qu'ils aiment avec passion! Alors, Officiers, Soldats, Américains, Américaines, tous se mêlent et dansent ensemble; c'est la fête de l'égalité."

Everyone danced that night, the young girls of New Stratford becoming partners for the gay French officers. What a charming sight it must have been! The girls were so pretty, their eyes so bright and eager, the uniforms of the officers so bewilderingly beautiful, and the moon shed a poetic light over

New Stratford

all the scene. The evening was all too short, but the Duke could not stay more than one night in a place, and his legion had to move on early in the morning.

On that eventful night, June 30, 1781, a son was born to Nehemiah, and the next morning before the Duke left, the child was shown to him and he was asked to name it. He promptly responded by giving this new mite of humanity his own name. One wonders if he ever again thought of his namesake. Perhaps not, for he had a rather light and flippant nature. We may hope, however, that his memories of New Stratford with its pretty Green were not like those he had of Lebanon in the same state, where he and his legion had spent the previous winter. He had made an apparently pleasant stay in that place and yet in his journal he wrote: "La Siberie seule peut être comparée à Lebanon, qui n'est composé que de quelques cabanes déspersées dans d'immense forêts."[1] In any event, De Lauzun de Forest loved in after days to tell his children of the romantic manner in which he had received his name.

[1] In October, 1781, only a few days before the defeat of Cornwallis, the Duc de Lauzun and his legion fell in with Tarleton and his troops. This resulted in a complete rout for Tarleton with a loss of over five hundred killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. As a reward for De Lauzun's bravery and brilliant exploit, he was chosen to carry the news of Cornwallis' surrender to France. Only twelve years later the unfortunate De Lauzun suffered on the guillotine in his native country.

CORNWALLIS SURRENDERS HIS ARMS TO WASHINGTON AFTER THE DEFEAT AT YORKTOWN IN VIRGINIA, OCTOBER, 1781. DE LAUZUN IN THE CENTRE

Part of a drawing by John Francis Renault

Another of the French officers on leaving New Stratford gave Squire Lewis a slender rapier as a memento. This rapier, with the name of the French maker on its blade, hung on the wall in the Squire's house for three generations; and only after the death of his granddaughter, Mrs. Nichols, was it taken away by her adopted daughter. *New Stratford*

Immediately after the close of the Revolutionary War a local matter stirred the little village of New Stratford to its depths. This was the question of the "New Town," which then began to be seriously discussed. At that time the parish of New Stratford was still in the township of Stratford and the county of Fairfield, but among the members of the parish were many energetic and progressive men who then began to agitate the subject of New Stratford's becoming a separate township. Ecclesiastical societies were usually the forerunners of towns, though they often existed many years before they were able to secure township privileges; but these active citizens apparently appealed to Old Stratford, and that town responded in January, 1782, by voting that in its opinion the New Stratford Society should be made a "New Town."

Active measures were immediately taken. Committees were formed; one to collect votes which the people's "agent" could take to the General Assembly, another to collect money for the agent's

New Stratford expenses, and still another to ascertain the distance which many of the inhabitants had to travel in going to Stratford Town House. A very important committee proceeded forthwith to "fix a centre for the New Town." This centre was finally laid out so as to include the very crest of the hill — the land on which the meeting-house stood.

The meeting-house itself had therefore to be freshened up to do honor to the "New Town." The interior was finished, the walls whitewashed, and the woodwork both inside and outside painted.

About this time the meeting-house in Old Stratford was destroyed by lightning and the inhabitants of New Stratford raised a subscription to help rebuild it — possibly having in mind not only a desire to assist their neighbors but also the advisability of encouraging them to stand firm in the township matter.

There was a great deal of rivalry between New Stratford and the neighboring parish of Ripton. In fact, Ripton was distinctly jealous of the pretensions of the younger parish. *She* had not yet been made a "New Town"; why should these "northern neighbors," this upstart society on the hill, have the privilege before she did? She opposed it strenuously and for years there were bitterness and hard feeling between the two societies. This feeling continued until April 21, 1788, when a final effort at reconciliation was made by a

committee of which Nehemiah de Forest was a member. *New Stratford*

The result was that an agent was appointed from each place — Captain Deodate Silliman from New Stratford, and Elisha Mills, Esq., from Ripton — who after conference, for "the sake of peace and friendship," recommended (as usual) that a memorial be sent to the General Assembly. The two agents apparently went to New Haven and the matter was in some way adjusted. At any rate, we hear nothing more on the subject.

Great, however, must have been the mortification of New Stratford when Ripton, the very next year, 1789, was made a town! It was then re-christened, as was usually done when an ecclesiastical society became a town, being named "Huntington" after one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. The new township of Huntington now comprised the two parishes of Ripton and New Stratford and it extended to the most northerly limits of Stratford Township on the Halfway River.

So New Stratford had to let her energetic insistence subside and to content herself with being simply an ecclesiastical society. She continued to be known by her original name for over thirty years longer, until 1823 indeed, when she also obtained town privileges and was called "Monroe" after James Monroe, then President of the United States.

This change in the appellation of a parish when

New Stratford it became a town has always led to confusion; it is hard to keep in mind that Ripton was an ecclesiastical society for seventy-two years before 1789, when it became the town of Huntington, and that New Stratford was an ecclesiastical society for sixty-one years before 1823, when it became the town of Monroe.

Nehemiah's Neighbor Nathan Wheeler

Foolshatch We must interrupt our narrative of Nehemiah at this point in order to put before the reader the story of his neighbor, Nathan Wheeler.

There was in Nehemiah's day a locality one mile west from New Stratford Green called "Foolshatch," which is said to have acquired its name in the following fashion: Two New Stratford men lost their way one dark night and after wandering for a long time decided to wait for daylight rather than to risk going farther afield. When morning broke, they found themselves close to their own homes and exclaimed, "Were ever two such fools hatched!" It is seldom that the name of a place can be so quaintly and so adequately explained.

The house in which Nehemiah established himself when he moved to New Stratford was not far from Foolshatch, and there he found already settled a man named Nathan Wheeler. Both Nehemiah and Nathan had families of young children and both attended services at the same meeting-house, so

that it was natural that the neighbors should become intimate friends. *Foolshatch*

Moses Wheeler, who in the earliest days of the Stratford settlement had been the lessee of the ferry across the Housatonic, was the great-grandfather of Nathan Wheeler of Foolshatch. Nathan was born October 19, 1747, in Ripton Parish, and he presumably moved to Foolshatch in 1773; for in April of that year it is recorded that his father, Deacon Moses, "in consideration of ye love and good will" gave his son twelve acres of land there, also "40 pounds of movable estate and other property."

Upon his arrival in New Stratford Parish Nathan immediately took a prominent and active part in its affairs; in fact, it is from his "Rate Bill for ye Meeting House 1774" that we get the earliest list of members of the new parish. He was collector for one of the two church districts, and among the thirty-nine names on his list we find his name and that of Nehemiah de Forest.

The year that Nathan received the gift of land from his father (1773) was also the year when he took to himself as wife young Charity Beach. Of Charity's father nothing is known except that his name was Beach,[1] but of her mother many inter-

[1] Orcutt and other Beach genealogists are in error in saying that he married the Charity Beach who was a daughter of Israel Beach and Hannah Burritt.

Foolshatch esting stories are still told. Her maiden name was Rhoda Beach, although she was not related to her first husband. She was presumably descended from John Beach, the first of that name, who came to Stratford in 1652. Rhoda's first marriage was of short duration, but after her husband's death she was not left wholly alone; for she had a child to comfort her heart, the only child she ever had, little Charity.

We shall have occasion to speak again of Rhoda, but it may be as well to say now that she took as her second husband John Morse and was for a second time left a widow at some date prior to 1793. In 1804 she was the wife of Peter Nichols and in 1806 we find her married to Jotham Sherman of Newtown. In after years she used to say that she married "once for love, once for money, and once for a home"; but that while the first marriage was the least happy, the fourth and last one was the happiest of all. After being thus four times left a widow, "Grandmother Sherman" lived to be a merry old lady eighty-nine years of age and died at Newtown in 1826.

Charity's father must have been a man of means, for he left his daughter well provided for. Tradition tells us that no bride ever came into the Wheeler family with so handsome a "setting up." "She brought money to the family," it was said. Apparently she owned at the time of her marriage a farm of over thirty-three acres at Foolshatch, and it was

on the southwest corner of Charity's farm, facing on the highway, that her husband proceeded to build a dwelling-house and barn. *Foolshatch*

Bride Charity brought with her to the farm a goodly "plenishing," not only of household linen, of fleeced blankets, plain blankets, white blankets, plaid blankets, of bedquilts, woolen quilts, calico quilts, plaid coverlets, and such things, which of course disappeared long ago, but also of more substantial possessions such as furniture, which is still in existence.

Her parlor was beautifully furnished, according to the standards of the time. It contained a solid cherry desk about four feet wide, with a hinged top, inside of which were many little drawers and cubby-holes, and with drawers below on which were melon-shaped handles. Then there was the round mahogany centre table, on which lay the "Great Bible," and on the wall a handsome mahogany-framed looking-glass with gilt moldings and ornaments. Standing against the walls were eight Windsor chairs, which were very fashionable when Charity was young. Windsor chairs were first made in Philadelphia, and when the style reached New England, they were considered to be much more elegant and comfortable than the slat or bannister or fiddle-back chairs that were in vogue there. In the fireplace were andirons with shovel and tongs, and on the mantel shelf stood Charity's brass candlesticks.

Foolshatch

But the glory of the whole room was the beautiful highboy! This was a particularly handsome one, with the two parts of the hooded top bending toward each other, while between them stood erect a slender carved flame. On the drawers were unusually beautiful handles and escutcheons. This highboy still has in one of its drawers the inscription, "Auguſt 1734 Brewſter Dayton made theeſe drawſ at Stratford," showing that it must have belonged to Charity's mother before it belonged to her. The same is very likely true regarding the mirror, for an old, old lady of the family used to say that this looking-glass dated back to a short time after the year 1700.

Of course, Charity had things which, though they were more homely, were just as necessary — her flax spinning wheel and the big wool wheel, as well as the brass warming-pan, and the tin foot-stove with which to keep her feet warm in church on cold Sundays.

All these mementoes of Charity can still be seen on Monroe hilltop in the house of Nathan Wheeler's grandson. Everything is tenderly cared for and is perfect still except the highboy, which, alas, has lost two of its beautiful handles. A stranger who was being hospitably entertained a few years ago wished to buy these handles, but being indignantly refused, stole two the next morning before leaving.

Three little girls were born to Nathan and Charity: Sally-Betsey (December 23, 1773); Mehetabel (September 9, 1777); and Rhoda (October 5, 1780), who was named for her grandmother. Charity did not live long to care for her children; not long enough, in fact, for Mehetabel to have any recollection of her mother. She died shortly after 1780 and was buried in the primitive graveyard laid out at New Stratford in 1766. Her interment was one of the last made there; and though her grave and indeed the graveyard have since disappeared, a fragment of her headstone was for a long time to be seen in an adjacent stone wall. *Foolshatch*

When Charity died, she left her farm to her trio of little daughters, making her husband "Proprietor" for life of three lots which contained in all about four acres, on one of which lots he had built the family home. In 1784 Nathan brought to this home as his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Matthew Hawley of Ripton. She never had children of her own but was a true mother to her stepdaughters, Mehetabel always declaring that no one ever had a more devoted stepmother or one that was more beloved.

Like a good New England housewife, stepmother "Betty" kept the three little girls busy. Slavery was common in New England at that time and we know that in 1790, when the first census of the United States was taken, Nathan Wheeler owned a

Foolshatch slave and later owned more than one;[1] but for all that, there was plenty of work to be done and the little girls had to help, not only on their stepmother's account but also that they might know later how to care for households of their own.

There were the sanded floors, for instance, on which no carpets were ever laid. These must be swept up, the sand sifted, and freshly strewn again. There was the baking in the big stone oven, where the fire was built inside the oven and then swept out with a wet corn-husk broom before the bread and pies and cookies could be baked in it. Then there were the cows to be milked. Years later Hetty used to say that when she was a little girl and went to the barn to milk the cows in the winter mornings, she often crouched down on the warm bedding where the cows had lain and buried her frozen toes in the straw to thaw them out.

There were also butter and cheese to be made; and as for the making of the linen, that was a never-ending task! The flax must be gathered and rotted in a running brook and passed through several other processes before it was ready for the hetcheling, the spinning, the weaving, and the final bleaching. Just think of the amount of flax which must be so treated

[1] It appears that these slaves used to spend much of their spare time pitching pennies on the stone step outside the kitchen door, and when the old house was torn down years afterward and this stone step removed, quite a number of the big coppers were found underneath and around it.

for the making of the dozens and dozens of sheets and towels and table-cloths that were part of every girl's "plenishing." *Foolshatch*

The wool also had to be carded and spun, ready for weaving into blankets or woolen cloth; some of it was spun into yarn as well, which was dyed with witch-hazel if gray yarn was desired, or with butternut bark if the color was to be a yellow brown. Even then a great task lay ahead of the little girls, for all these hanks of yarn were destined to be knitted into everlastingly long stockings and mufflers. Weary must those little fingers have been, notwithstanding the incentive which spurred them on — the incentive of filling the great chests which stood in the attic and which must be full to overflowing against the time of their weddings! A girl at fourteen was given a chest and was allowed to have all the linen and wool she could spin, which was then woven and set apart in her chest for her marriage portion, and no girl was supposed to be ready for marriage until she had knitted a pillow-case full of stockings. Therefore were Charity Beach's flax wheel and great wool wheel kept very busy.

The de Forest girls — of whom there were now three, Abby, Polly, and Betsey — lived on the hilltop just above the Wheelers and were of about the same ages; they were also working toward the same end and could not allow themselves to be outdone by the Wheeler girls. Therefore there was a friendly

Foolshatch rivalry among the six girl friends, who had much to talk of and to plan for. Of course the Wheeler girls were glad that the de Forest girls had brothers; for the young Wheelers of Foolshatch had none of their own, and as they all went to school together in New Stratford, they undoubtedly had a merry time.

The year 1793 was a momentous one in both families. In that year Grandmother Rhoda, whose surname was then Morse and who at that time was in her second widowhood, came to live at Foolshatch. Nathan Wheeler, who probably felt that she had some claim on the property, as it had belonged to her daughter Charity, agreed to "lease and letten" to her the "new part" of his house. He may even have built the new part expressly for her. This wing lay to the south of the main house, and Nathan set aside for Grandmother Rhoda's use the dooryard in front of her part of the house, the garden, one fourth of the barn, and all the rest of the four acres of which he was proprietor except the older part of his dwelling-house and a square of land immediately in the rear of it. He also reserved for himself "liberty to pass and repass" through her dooryard, and to convey things through her cellar to the one underneath his part of the house.

All Grandmother Rhoda's privileges were given to her "during her natural life," unless (and here comes a very amusing provision, indicating how well Nathan knew his mother-in-law), she married again.

Foolshatch

In this case he was to decide whether he should like his new masculine relative for so close a neighbor, and if not, Rhoda with her new husband was to seek another home and Nathan was to pay her annually the renting value of her former premises. If, however, she "became again a single woman," she was to return to her home at Foolshatch. Nathan, even with all his knowledge of Rhoda's character, made no provision with regard to a fourth marriage, but she surely contracted that number of alliances and with her fourth and final husband, Jotham Sherman, was in occupation of the house in 1806!

But the chief event of 1793, and the one which makes the Wheeler family of so much interest in a record of the de Forests, was the love affair between little Mehetabel Wheeler and Nehemiah's young son Lockwood. The children were so young (Lockwood was eighteen and "Hetty" not yet sixteen!) that their love-making was received with much disapproval by their respective fathers even in that generation of early marriages. Lockwood, however, already showed something of the iron determination which was later to distinguish him, and the wedding finally took place. Mehetabel proved to be a lovely and capable wife, and the marriage drew the two families even more closely together.

On December 8, 1797, four years after Hetty's marriage, her father bought a large farm in the

New Stratford

village of New Stratford. This farm belonged to the Rev. Samuel Monson and his wife and included sixty-four acres of land with a house and barn. It was situated at the northeast corner of the village green and for it Nathan paid $5,583.

The house was built at the head of a beautiful meadow, which slopes downward toward the Housatonic River, although the river itself is not in sight, and all the distance is composed of lovely rolling hills and woodlands. Indeed, from this point one could see the meadow that had been mowed by moonlight for the benefit of the French hussars' horses. The dwelling was a commodious one, which faced on the highway, while from the rear one looked out on the lovely view.

Nathan's wife and daughters were undoubtedly overjoyed to move from the quiet country of Foolshatch to a place of which it was said that it was "quite populous and active" and that the social life was "by no means stupid or slow." Of course it was great fun for Sally and Rhoda Wheeler to come to live just across the Green from their friends, Abby and Polly and Betsey de Forest.

This flock of young people were no doubt greatly pleased at the decision of the New Stratford Society to "obtain subscriptions for the promotion of singing" — the establishment, in fact, of a singing school — while Stepmother Betty was probably even more interested in the decision to ring a curfew

bell "at nine o'clock in the evening on the parish expense." *New Stratford*

Sally and Rhoda had not been long on the hilltop, however, before they each had protection of an even more effective kind than that afforded by the curfew bell; for in the spring of 1804 Sally gave her heart into the keeping of Daniel Nichols of Newtown, Connecticut, and her sister Rhoda, following her example, became at about the same time the bride of Josiah Curtis Grant.

Thus Nathan and Betty were left alone in the "Homestead Farm," but Nathan had hardly time to be lonely, for he had become a man of much consequence in the community. He was usually a member of the committee of the New Stratford Society, a justice of the peace, and a register of deeds — all important offices in those days. In addition, he was a prosperous farmer, tilling the fields on his various tracts of land and caring for his numerous cattle. His "cattle mark" is still recorded in the official book kept for that purpose: "3 hapenys underside of the off ear and a nick on the uper side of the same."

His house was a great meeting-place for all the friends and neighbors. He always had a stock of cider brandy on hand for such occasions ("winkum," as it was locally called because of the effect it was said to have upon the eyes); when he died, he left a hogshead and two barrels of it safely stowed in his cellar. He was probably as temperate as his con-

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temporaries, but those were days when men thought it inhospitable not to urge their guests to drink. When, therefore, the neighbors gathered, he would bring out the great punch bowl and the tall toddy glass, holding about a quart, which always stood on the mantel, one glass for the use of all irrespective of the number assembled; and after the glass had made several rounds, the company was prepared to discuss any subject, no matter how profound.

Nathan's house came to be called the "Sabba'-day House," and every wintry Sunday noon a meeting took place there, when all would sit around the kitchen fire and drink punch and lay in a stock of warmth to stand them in good stead during the long second preaching in the cold meeting-house.

But the cheer in Nathan's home was turned to mourning when on December 22, 1801, his good wife Betty was taken from him. She had indeed been a helpmeet to him for nearly twenty years and a devoted mother to his daughters. No doubt he grieved for her; but his home was lonely after his Betty was gone, and only a few months later he took to himself another wife.

This time he chose Eunice, daughter of Nathan Nichols of the neighboring town of Trumbull, and widow of Captain Jonathan Edwards. Eunice brought with her to her new husband's home two daughters and a son, so that Nathan's house was once more full of the voices of children; and to these

children were soon added others, a daughter, Betsey, born to them in 1803, and a son, Nathan Nichols, in 1806. *New Stratford*

Nathan Wheeler enjoyed his new happiness for eleven years, but on April 11, 1817, when in his seventieth year, he died at his Homestead Farm. He had ever been an upright and useful citizen and his death was a loss to the parish.

His estate was valued at about $18,000. The Homestead Farm he left to his son, Nathan Nichols Wheeler, as well as much other property, and his widow was to have her "widow's thirds" out of her son's share, while all the furniture was left to her and to her daughter Betsey. The widow continued to live in the Homestead with Betsey, but her son, "Deacon Nathan N. Wheeler," built a home for himself on the opposite side of the highway, at the time of his marriage.

Eunice lived until 1853, when she died, aged eighty-five, and her daughter Betsey, who had never married, finding the old home too lonely, went with all her belongings to live in her brother's home. These belongings included all of Charity Beach's beloved furniture, which may be seen to this day in her brother's house "across the way." The Homestead Farm is still owned by the Wheeler family; and although the old house has been destroyed, a depression in the meadow still marks the site where it stood.

Nehemiah's Later Years

New Stratford

In the de Forest household changes were meanwhile taking place. When we last saw that home, the gentle mother, Mary Lockwood, was tending her little children; but as they grew older, Mary's health began to decline and it became evident that she was drifting into "a consumption." As the family Bible of her son Lockwood tells us, she died on October 17, 1790, "in the triumph of faith and Christian hope and assurance," aged forty-five. Nehemiah buried his "amiable Consort" in the new burying-ground at New Stratford and caused to be inscribed on her headstone these words: —

> "She sleeps in this bed of Dust,
> Being removed from weeping Friends
> by tearless Death." [1]

Mary's children were all living at home at the time of her death. Abby was nineteen years old, William seventeen, Lockwood fifteen, Polly thirteen, Philo eleven, De Lauzun nine, and Betsey only five. Seven children left without a mother and at a time

[1] Nehemiah may have composed this epitaph himself, but it is a curious fact that although the foundations of New England were so largely composed of granite, which should surely have furnished an unlimited supply of gravestones, these were almost entirely imported from North Wales, many already carved with verses such as the very usual one: —

> " As I am now so shall you be
> Prepare for Death & follow me."

when they most needed one! Mary had been a loving, tender mother, a "prayerful" one, and they felt her loss sorely. *New Stratford*

Three years passed thus and it then became evident that Nehemiah had thoughts of bringing another wife to the inn. This was in the spring of 1793, the year which has already been spoken of as being momentous in both the de Forest and Wheeler families. Only one month after Lockwood's marriage to Hetty Wheeler, Nehemiah followed his son's example and on August 28, 1793, was himself wedded to Eleanor Hickock,[1] who thus became the new landlady of the inn.

We may be sure that her life was a busy one; for the manifold duties which were performed at Nathan Wheeler's house had of course to be performed in the inn as well, since at that period one house was much like another in this respect. The inn, like Nathan Wheeler's homestead, was a kind of "Sabba'day House." Friends who came from a distance kept their Sunday bonnets there and also their foot-stoves. A great pile of foot-stoves was to be seen behind the kitchen door all through the week. Then early on Sabbath morning a great fire of hickory wood was built, and when church folk arrived they would doff their hoods or mufflers and put on the Sunday bonnets, and having filled their

[1] Daughter of Joseph and Sarah [Wakely] Hickock of Southbury Parish, Woodbury, Conn.

New Stratford stoves with red-hot coals, would walk across the Green to the meeting-house.

The year following their marriage a little son, Charles by name, was born to Nehemiah and Eleanor. The baby lived only three days, but a second son, born a year later (August 10, 1795), was given the same name and proved to be a fine, robust child and the darling of his father's heart.

When Nehemiah married Eleanor he was fifty years of age, not very old, and yet he was described as being "a social and stirring old man." It was also said that he was "a faithful overseer and tutor of the boys and their manners when rude and boisterous and when throwing stones at the meeting house or marking fences." He was, of course, a very well-known figure in and around New Stratford, where he was in the habit of driving "a sartain oldish sorril mair."

He belonged to the Masonic Order and had been for some years a member of the lodge in Stratford. In 1791 he became one of the nine charter members of the New Stratford lodge. The night of his installation (February 21, 1791) he was raised to the second and third degrees (Master Mason), and after the proceedings were over, the company adjourned to "Brother N. Deforest's house and partook of an elegant Dinner." When in due time Nehemiah decided to leave New Stratford, an elaborate certificate of membership was given to him, which after

his death was returned to the lodge, where to this day it may be seen hanging on the wall. *New Stratford*

A question of great public interest came up for discussion in the town meetings at about this date, and Nehemiah and Nathan Wheeler were among those who were called on to give their opinions. There had been two deaths from smallpox in the village. What was to be done? Should they give "Liberty for Inoculation" or could any better plan be devised by the meeting? In many of the Connecticut towns smallpox hospitals had been established where "classes," as they were called, were admitted and the patients inoculated, whole families sometimes going into retirement together. Should New Stratford, therefore, follow the example of her neighbors and approve of inoculation? After much discussion an adverse decision was reached, and it was only after three years of opposition that an affirmative vote was finally passed and a hospital established.

At that time Legrand M. Lewis, who was later to become Abby de Forest's husband, was one of those put in charge of the hospital, and very careful directions were given for disinfecting anyone who had entered the pest-house, even physicians being fined heavily for neglecting the prescribed precautions.

Another subject, this time pertaining to religion, agitated the ecclesiastical society. The Congrega-

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tional church was then, we know, the official church in Connecticut, and Episcopalians in New Stratford as well as elsewhere were still obliged to pay their rates for the support of the official church, and there were many mutterings of dissatisfaction among the Episcopalians when rates became due. Finally in 1794 Legrand M. Lewis, who was then "Society's Clerk," received a letter, a rather startling one to the society's committee, from a certain member of the Episcopalian church announcing: "Sir. As I belong to the episcopal Church of North Stratford, do not intend paying any more rates towards the support of Public Worship at this place. I am Sir, etc."

Thus was the ball set rolling! Another man was a little more explicit: "Having examined the doctrines of the Christian religion as held by the presbyterians [1] I find rather too much of 'We can and we can't, we will and we won't, we are damned if we do, and we are damned if we don't.' I shall therefore in future pay my Ministerial taxes to Mr. Baldwin rector of Christ's Church in Trumbull."

Still another man, who had never as yet "made profession of religion," wrote: "I do hereby sollemnly announce to you and to the world that I am an Episcopalian . . . as I believe it to be the most *Duglefying* both to body and to soul of all the Churches on earth . . . and much less *Gingleing*

[1] Congregationalists were then often called Presbyterians.

than the Presbeterians or Baptists." He accordingly claimed "the benefit of an act of the General Assembly of this state in such case provided," and was thereby saved from the "Gingleing" of the Presbyterians and blessed by the "Duglefying" of the Episcopalians. *New Stratford*

In this wise there were fifteen or more withdrawals from the New Stratford Society. The Assembly had indeed passed an act releasing Episcopalians from the onerous obligation of paying the ecclesiastical society tax, but the present defection gave the older meeting-house members great concern.

Nehemiah, however, could not give all his attention to public affairs at this time. He had daughters on that hilltop whose attractions could not be hid. Of his children none other married so early as had his son Lockwood, but it seems probable that both Abby and Polly had been "bespoken" as early as 1797. We know that Abby was married to Legrand Moss Lewis "Esq."[1] before the end of the year, and as indication of the approximate date of the wedding we find that on September 28, 1797, Nehemiah sold him a plot of land, which thereafter became the homestead of Legrand and Abby. It contained seven acres and lay near the meeting-house and Nehemiah's own home on the Green. This tract was at Brushy Ring, the first purchase of land which Nehemiah had made on the

[1] Son of Robert and Eunice [Wells] Lewis.

New Stratford hill, and it adjoined property already belonging to Legrand's father, Robert Lewis.

Tradition still tells of Abby's preparations for her wedding. Some of her silver spoons had "coffin-shaped" handles, which were even then called "Old fashioned," but she also had some "Fashionable Teaspoons." There were silver-plated candlesticks and iron candlesticks with brass balls and brass-headed andirons and doubtless many other fine things of which we know nothing. Her linen sheets, many pairs of them, had long been ready, bleached and folded away in her wedding chest in the attic, each one marked in the corner with a tiny "A" in red cross-stitch.

Abby was a somewhat peculiar young lady, very old-fashioned even for those days, rather sentimental, but sweet and gentle. As is still the custom, the bride went before the wedding to select the furniture for her new home. With such commendable foresight had she thought out all the possible contingencies of her married life that she had the corners of all the tables carefully rounded off lest her children should hurt their heads against them. But, alas, Fate decreed that Abby Lewis should be childless!

All the preparations having been made, there was undoubtedly a very grand wedding in the old inn when Abby and Legrand were made one. On this occasion the bridegroom probably wore a "pale blue

straight bodied coat" and a "pair of light colored short breeches"; for these were articles treasured by Abby after her husband's death. *New Stratford*

Among her precious belongings she also kept an acrostic written by some admiring friend, perhaps at about the time of her marriage: —

"A flowret grew beside the stream
B looming both fair and bright
B ut oh t'was transient as a dream
Y es fled before the night
L ike this is life then may we learn
E ver to improve it as it flies
W hile others from the right way turn
I n courage let's pursue the prize
S oon we shall reach it in the skies."

Unfortunately Abby's happiness was of short duration, eleven years at most. On April 29, 1808, when he was only thirty-nine years old, Legrand M. Lewis departed this life and was buried at New Stratford, which had always been his home. He was an able man and had been sent several times as Representative to the General Assembly from Ripton, or Huntington, as it was then called. Indeed, it was said of him that he "stood very high in public esteem in church and town, and had he lived, would beyond doubt have held a prominent place in civil affairs."

The inn was to see still another wedding in 1797. On November 16th, when Polly de Forest was twenty years of age, she was "joined in Weedlock"

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to Samuel Moss Monson. He was the son of the Rev. Samuel Monson, from whom Nathan Wheeler bought his New Stratford farm only three weeks after the wedding.

Polly's married life was not very happy and it lasted only about five years, for her husband died on March 11, 1803, aged twenty-six. One son was born to them on September 3, 1798, of whom, however, little is known except that his name was H. Nelson Monson. This name is found in the will of the child's uncle, Legrand Moss Lewis, who left a fund of $700 to be "laid out in his education under the care and superintendency" of another uncle, De Lauzun de Forest. The Lewises had no children of their own and Uncle Legrand seems to have been particularly fond of this little boy, who was not yet ten years old when his uncle died. He also made this nephew his residuary legatee. The mothers of Legrand Lewis and Samuel Monson were cousins, which of course made the tie between the young men all the stronger.

The two young widows, Abby and Polly, were very close to one another until the time of Polly's death in 1810. Abby was always tender to her sister's memory, usually alluding to her as "my poor sister Monson."

In 1796 a desire for change had come over Nehemiah's two older sons, William and Lockwood, and

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they had decided to make a venture in a new locality. Consequently they had bought two acres of land with a house, barn, and store on it near the "Congregational Church of Easton" in the township of Weston, which adjoined New Stratford on the west. A year later, the year when his two sisters were married, Lockwood, in preparation for a further move, had sold his share of the Weston property to his brother William.

These removals seem to have inspired Nehemiah also with a desire for a change of residence. He therefore decided to purchase the land and buildings in Weston from William. He may have found the New Stratford home too burdensome a care now that so many of his family had married and moved away, or he may have tired of innkeeping; but the reason given was the wish that his son Charles might have the advantage of being educated at the Academy[1] which was established that year in Weston. As the boy was, however, at that time only two and a half years old, he seems over young to have profited by such scholastic advantages. Still, the opportunity was tempting. The Academy prospectus announced

[1] The Staples Academy is still to be seen in Easton, as the little village is now called, with its little square cupola and wide old clapboards, where "children and youth" are instructed as they were over one hundred years ago. It was founded and endowed by Mr. Samuel Staples and for three quarters of a century it ranked among the leading educational institutions of New England.

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"strict attention paid to the deportment and morals of children and youth" and also said that among other studies to be taught were Latin, Greek, and oratory. All this for $1 per quarter! Yes, it was certainly tempting!

Nehemiah now began active preparations for leaving New Stratford, where he had lived for the last twenty-two years. In order to simplify his holdings of land, he sold off all his outlying tracts — his Moose Hill property, his nine acres at Bowles' Swamp, his seventeen acres at Little Faun Hill, and his tract of land at Lattin's Mill with one half of the mill itself, which was situated on the Great Halfway River. It was at about the same time that he sold to Legrand M. Lewis for £130 [1] his lot containing seven acres at Brushy Ring.

On September 15, 1797, he sold to Nathan Wheeler, Samuel Beardsley, and Samuel Wheeler for $2500 the old inn and the fourteen acres of land which surrounded it. He was not yet, however, quite ready to make the final move; for his two daughters were about to be married and there were also many preparations for removal still to be made. Therefore he reserved to himself the right to reap and remove the crops then on the land and to occupy the house and grounds until the fifteenth of the next May.

[1] Money was still often reckoned in English currency in the country districts.

ACADEMY AT EASTON, AS IT LOOKED IN 1799 AND STILL LOOKS TODAY

After having thus divested himself of most of his landed interests, Nehemiah finally, on March 31, 1798, completed the purchase of William's property and paid him £400 for the land in Weston which the latter had bought two years before. *New Stratford*

Thus the old inn was left still facing on the "Place of Parade," as the public green was often called after war time, but no longer under the efficient management of Landlord de Forest. This was not, however, the last time that the de Forest name was to be connected with the house. Hepzibah de Forest, Nehemiah's sister, as we knew long ago, married Milton Hawley, and many years later (in 1807) Hepzibah's granddaughter, Jane Hawley, who was then living in New Stratford, was married to Linson de Forest [1] from that house. Then in 1840 Jane's daughter, Mary Jane de Forest, was also married from this house, but she was the last de Forest who ever lived there.

Later a school was kept in the old "front room" — a school attended by some of Hetty Wheeler's nephews as well as by many other boys and girls, some of whom are still living and who well remember the old blue-and-white tiles around the fireplace in that room.

Alas and alas! these tiles — the ones with the scriptural subjects about which Nehemiah's first wife Mary used to tell stories to her little ones — are

[1] Grandson of Benjamin de Forest and Esther Beardsley of Ripton.

New Stratford no more to be seen. A frightful crash was heard one day in the front room and on investigation it was discovered that all the old tiles had fallen out and not even one remained unbroken.

Soon after this calamity the house was taken down, and now the only visible trace of Nehemiah's old home is the flat stone in the public green which covers the well from which his children and his children's children drank.

Weston In 1798 Nehemiah left the old hilltop home and went to live in his new house at Weston. This house stood directly opposite the Academy. It was large — two stories high, with a tiny peaked porch over the door and long rows of windows across the front. It was really quite necessary that Nehemiah's house should be a large one; for it is said to have often sheltered his various married children as well as his immediate family.

As for the store, he took one of his younger sons, Philo, into partnership, and the "Centre Store" was run by "Nehemiah Deforest & Son." They sold general merchandise and of course, like all storekeepers in those days, had a license to sell wines and spirits, and they apparently did a good business.

This prosperous life amid new surroundings did not last long, however; for although we have no details of his death, we know that Nehemiah lived only three and a half years to enjoy his new home. Upon the eighth day of December, 1801, he found himself

"weak in body but of Perfect mind and memory," and proceeded to set his affairs in order and to make his last will and testament, knowing that the time was at hand when he must "die and quit this vale of tears." He declared rather quaintly that he would "give and bequeath" to Eleanor all the furniture which she had brought with her upon "our intermarriage," and the list of her plenishings is a goodly one. *Weston*

The list of Nehemiah's own personal effects included many interesting items of old furniture which his descendants would much like to own: an old oak chest, various other chests, a chest and drawers, fiddle-backed chairs, fire-dogs, warming-pans, pewter articles, tables both round and square, silver teaspoons and tablespoons, and no less than five bedsteads, all of them with under beds and the usual appurtenances — none too many, though, for his large family. His library consisted of the following books only: "Great bible, Flavel Works,[1] Scripture truth, Singing book, 12 N°. Evangelical magazine, Dwight's Geography, Life of George Whitefield." The only real estate which Nehemiah then owned was his property at Weston.

Everything that was not willed to Eleanor was divided by Nehemiah among his children.[2] William

[1] Flavel's best-known work is Husbandry Spiritualized, 1669.

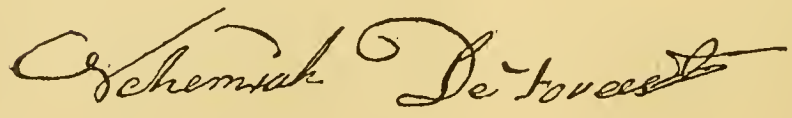
[2] For an account of Nehemiah's children see Appendix, p. 301.

Weston and Lockwood, he said, had already received their shares. Polly and Abby each had had a "setting out." De Lauzun was to have one third of his portion deducted on account of the education which his father had given him. Philo and Charles were to share alike, and Betsey was to have half as much as her brothers.

Three neighbors were summoned to witness the will, and all earthly matters having thus been duly attended to, "Mr. Nehemiah de Forest" departed this life on December 9, 1801, in the fifty-eighth year of his age.

His grave is yet to be seen in the cemetery at Easton near the Baptist church, and its quaint inscription is still visible: —

> "The wise, the just, the pious and the brave,
> Live in their deeds and flourish from the grave;
> Grain hid in the earth, decoys the peasant's care,
> And evening's sun sets but to rise more fair."



END OF VOLUME I

De Forest EY
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v.1

Walloon family in America.

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MAP OF HUNTINGTON (RIPTON) AND

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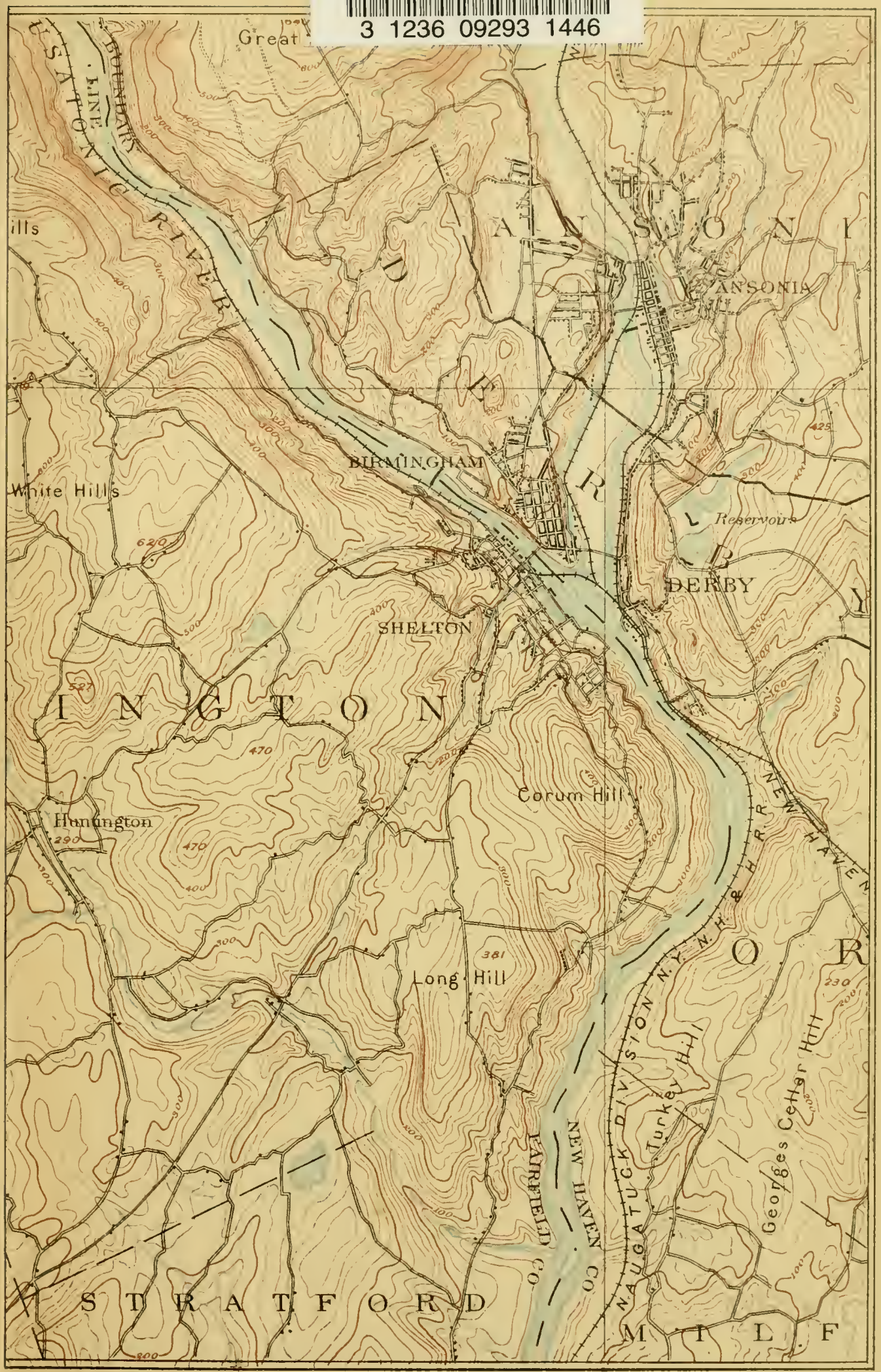

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